NICARAGUA

FOR BEGINNERS

BY RIUS

Writers and Readers

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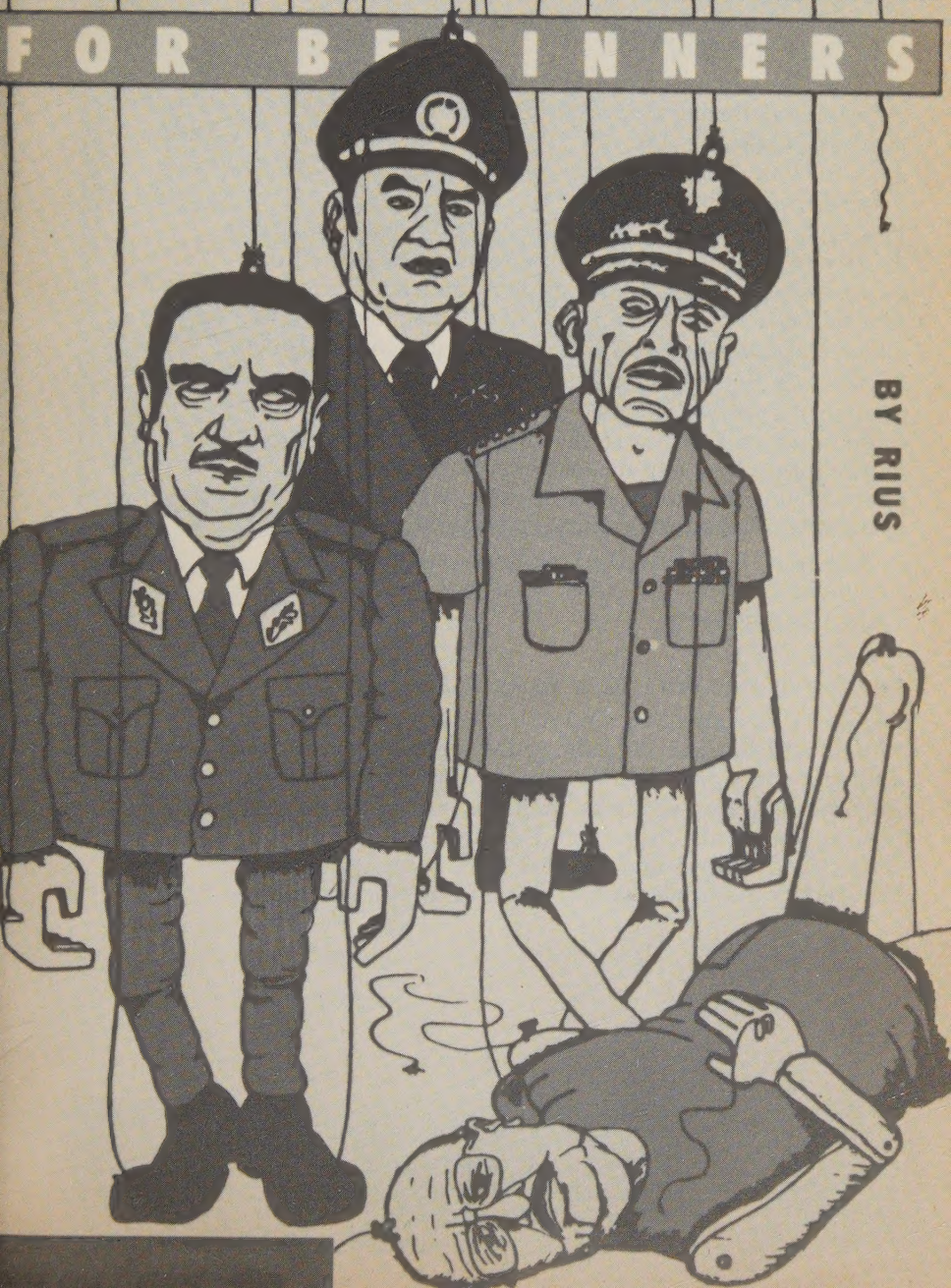

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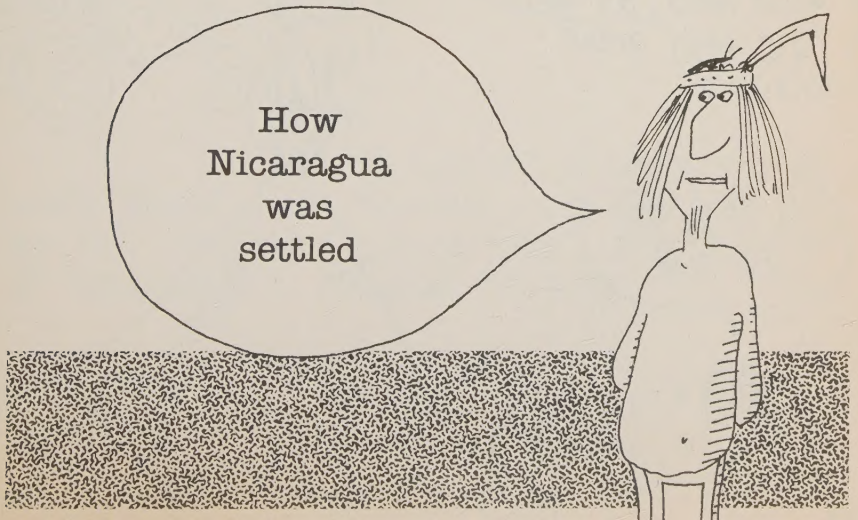
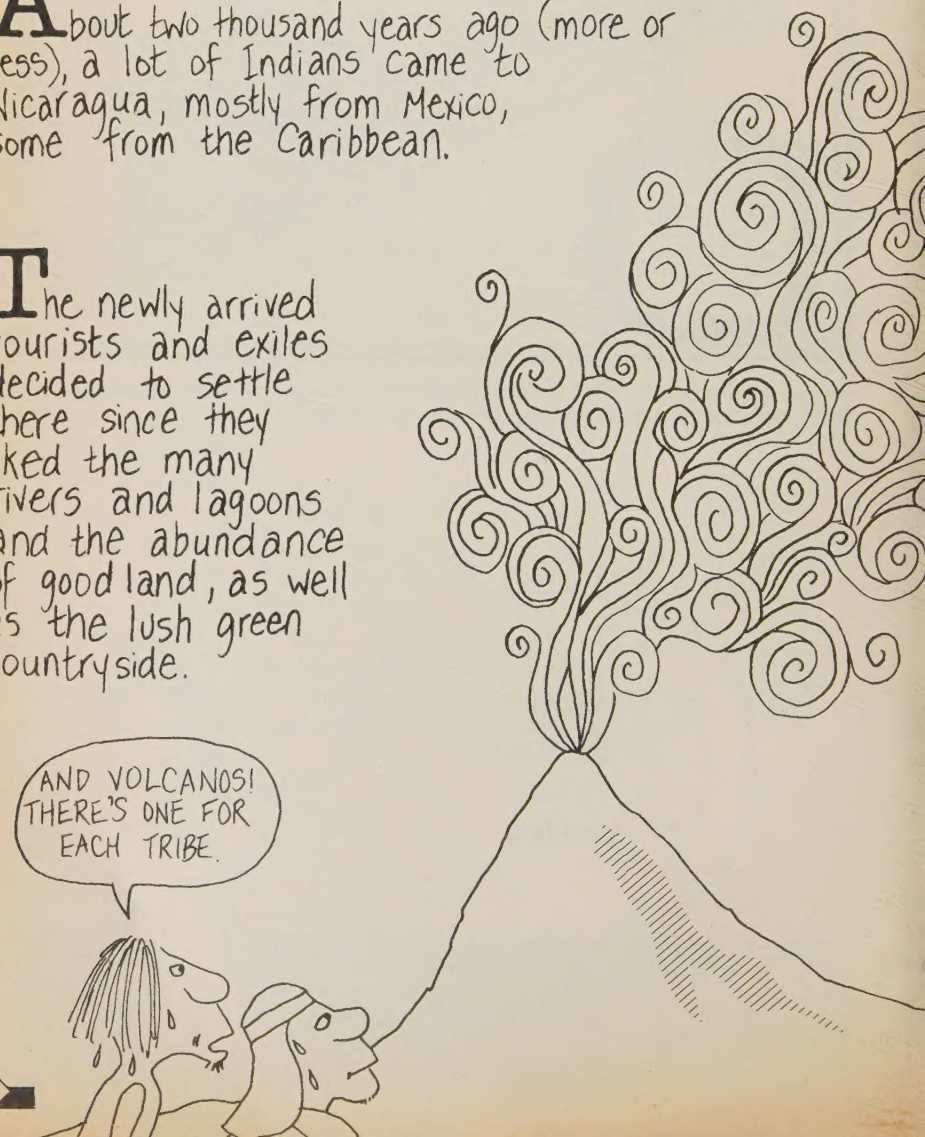
Chapter 1:

French map made in 1650 showing the political divisions of Mexico, Guadalajara, and Guatemala, which included Chiapas and Central America.



About two thousand years ago (more or less), a lot of Indians came to Nicaragua, mostly from Mexico, some from the Caribbean.

The newly arrived tourists and exiles decided to settle there since they liked the many rivers and lagoons and the abundance of good land, as well as the lush green countryside.



The first inhabitants of Nicaragua were probably the Mosquitos (not the kind that bite), who were later pushed out by the Chorotegas, who were in turn pushed aside by the Nahuas from Mexico. They imposed their Mexican culture on the region.

The number of place names which sound like Mexican ones, as well as the Mexican-looking faces, are proof of Nicaragua's Mexican heritage.

Iztapalapa, Amecameca, Jálapa, Ajusco, Amatitlán, Tonalá, Chapultepec, Comalcalco, Olinalá, Cuajimcuilapa, Panzacola, etc.
And the corn-based diet is almost like Mexican food.
They knew math, a little astronomy, the decimal system (with base five), and, like the Mexicans, they farmed, hunted, and fished.
But it's hot as hell!

They lived in relative peace and prosperity, eating off gold plates. Then one day, as was the custom in those times, they were

DISCOVERED.

This great deed was acomplished by

Admiral Christopher Columbus,

who made his living discovering.

The Date?

September 12, 1502.

The Place?

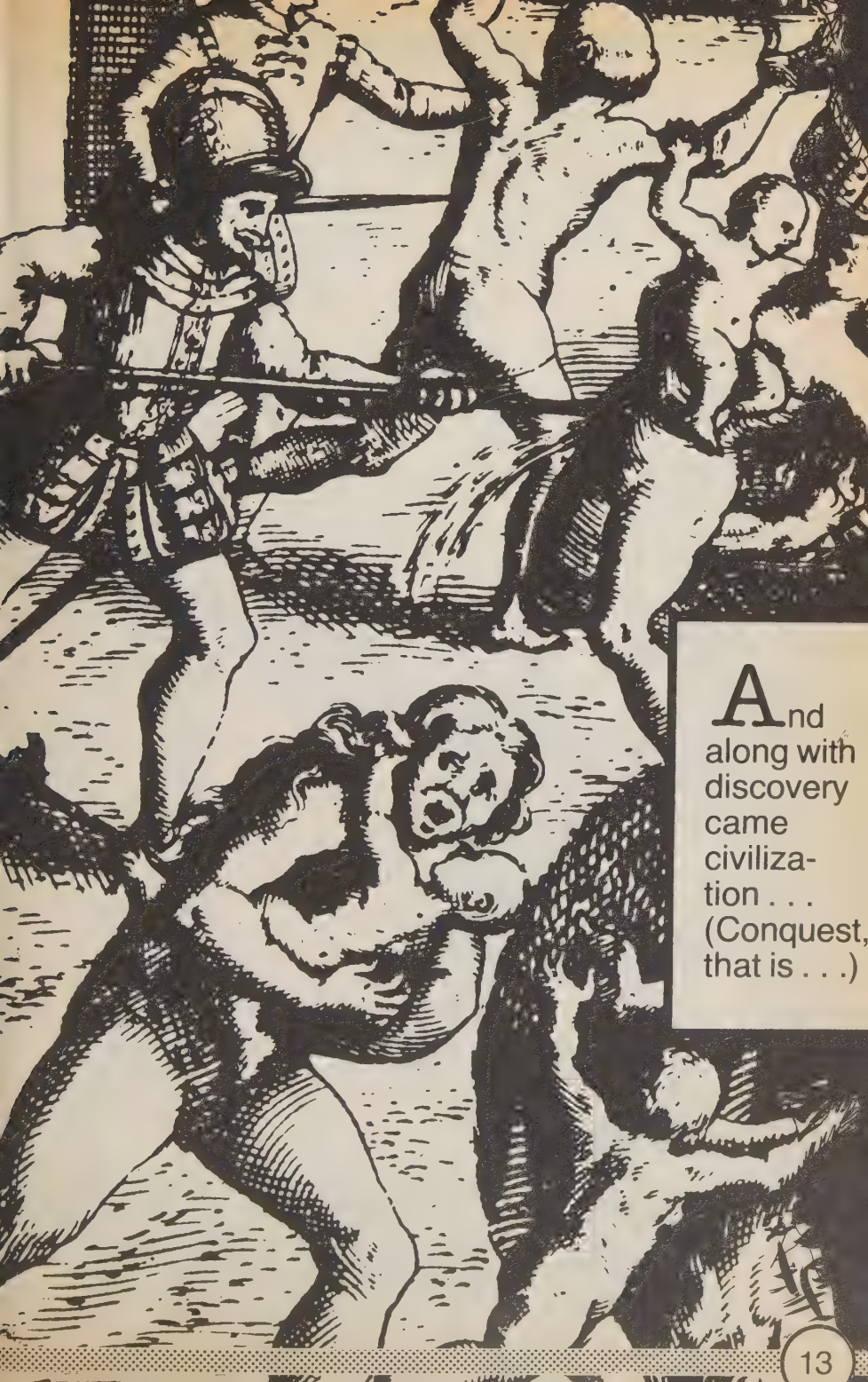
the mouth of the Rama River, at the site of the present town of Bluefields on the Atlantic Coast.

"Nicaragua has the best land and people that we've found in the New World. There's high ground, many rivers and lots of tall trees."

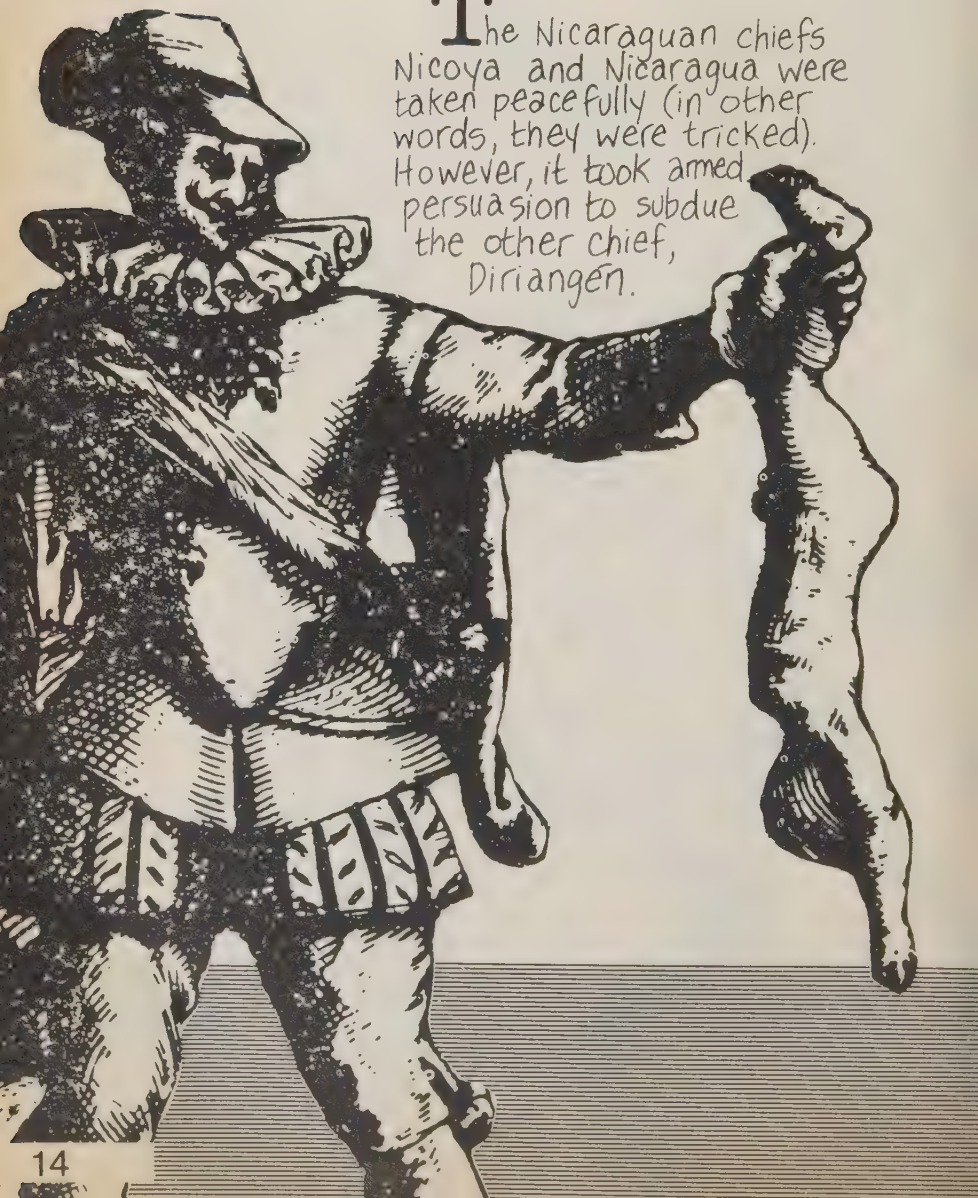
So . . .

after 15 days of collecting gold, parrots, and women, Columbus and his prospectors brought the news back to Spain.

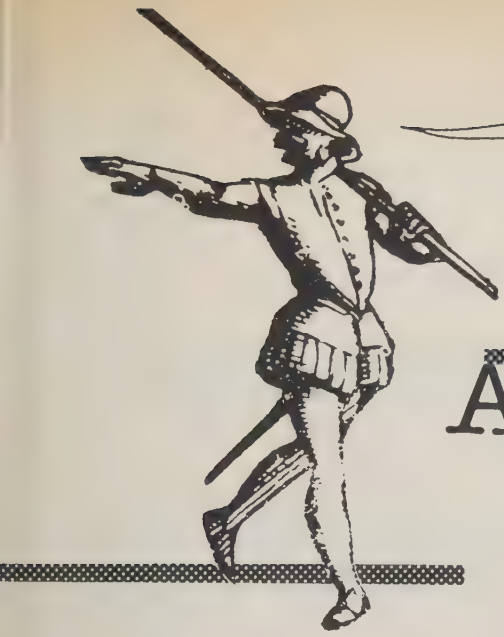
Nothing has been the same since.


And along with discovery came civilization . . . (Conquest, that is . . .)

The Conquest and Christianization of Nicaragua began in 1523, when two cruel, ambitious conquistadores, Gil Gonzáles Dávila and Andrés Niño, marched up from Panama.



The Nicaraguan chiefs Nicoya and Nicaragua were taken peacefully (in other words, they were tricked). However, it took armed persuasion to subdue the other chief, Diriangen.



After they had conquered the small nation, the Spanish claimed the Indian men and women and founded the towns of Granada, León and Masaya. They declared that all of Nicaragua was property of their majesties, the King and queen of Spain, by the grace of God.

Of course, before enslaving the Indians or killing them, the Spanish were kind enough to Christianize them so they could go to heaven without beaurocrati hassles.

Just as in Mexico, the conquistadores destroyed the Indian culture (including valuable manuscripts) and imposed their "new" Spanish culture based on repressive, medieval Catholicism.

Since they didn't understand the Indian languages, they even got the names wrong.

For example they thought:

NAHUALOTLI was NAGAROTE

XILOATL ⟶ JILOÁ

CHINAMCALTECA ⟶ CHINANDEGA

ITZTETLI ⟶ ESTELÍ

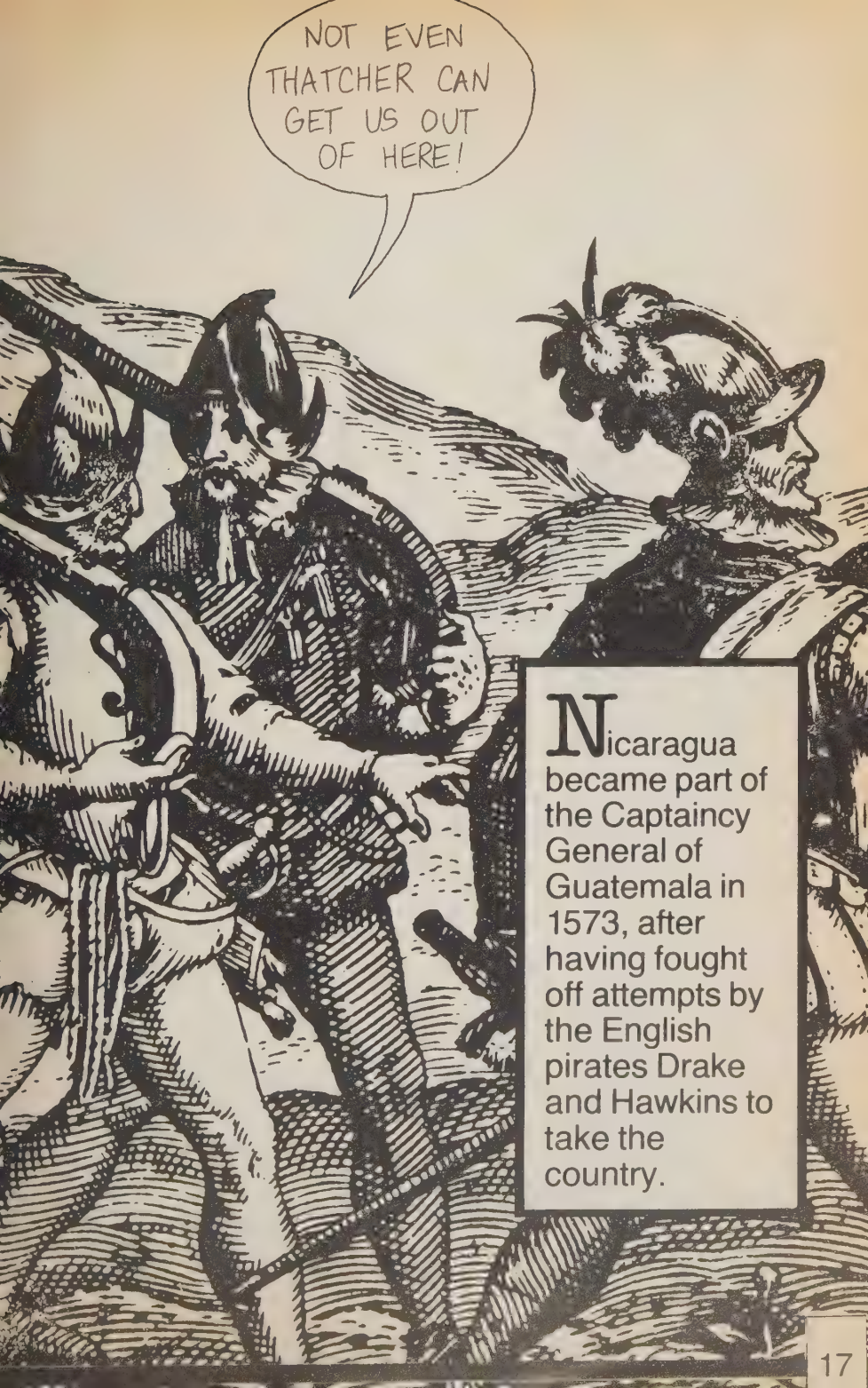
MANAHUAC ⟶ MANAGUA

MASALTYAN ⟶ MASAYA

CHIPOATLI ⟶ CHIPOTE

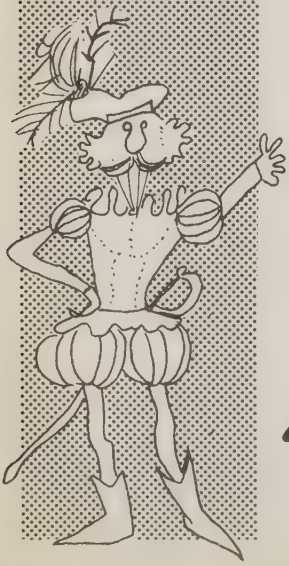
CIHUACOATL ⟶ SÉBACO

MATLALCAPAN ⟶ MATAGALPA...



Nicaragua became part of the Captaincy General of Guatemala in 1573, after having fought off attempts by the English pirates Drake and Hawkins to take the country.

It soon became apparent that there were Nicaraguans of various classes and colors.



1ST CLASS:
Whites born in Spain.

2ND CLASS:
Whites born in Nicaragua.

3RD CLASS:
Mestizos (children of Spaniards and Nicaraguans).

4TH CLASS:
Dark-skinned Indians. Blacks on the Atlantic Coast.

The Atlantic Coast, isolated from the rest of the country, was conquered by the British. In **1625**, they established the PROTECTORATE of MESQUITÍA, full of blacks, Rama, Sumo and Mosquito Indians (now called Miskitos).

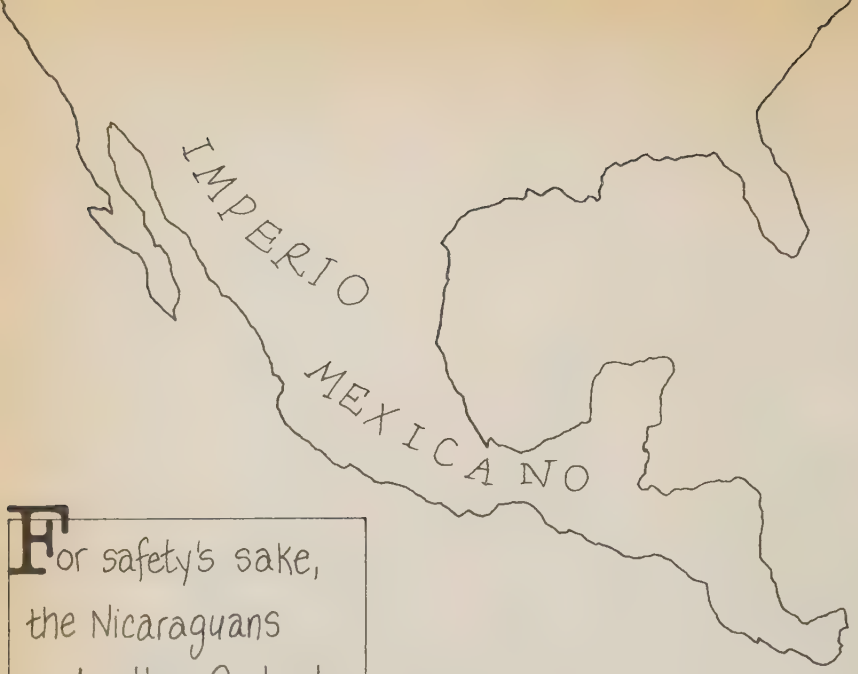
As in the rest of Spanish America, Nicaraguans got tired of supporting the Spanish and declared

INDEPENDENCE

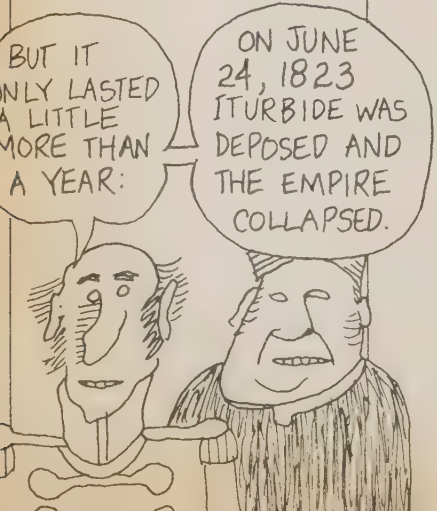
So in

1821

Mexico and Central America became independent of the mother country.

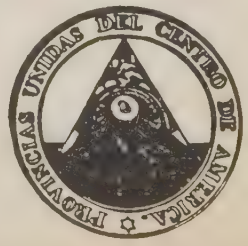


For safety's sake, the Nicaraguans and other Central Americans joined the Mexican Empire of Agustín de Iturbide on January 5, 1822

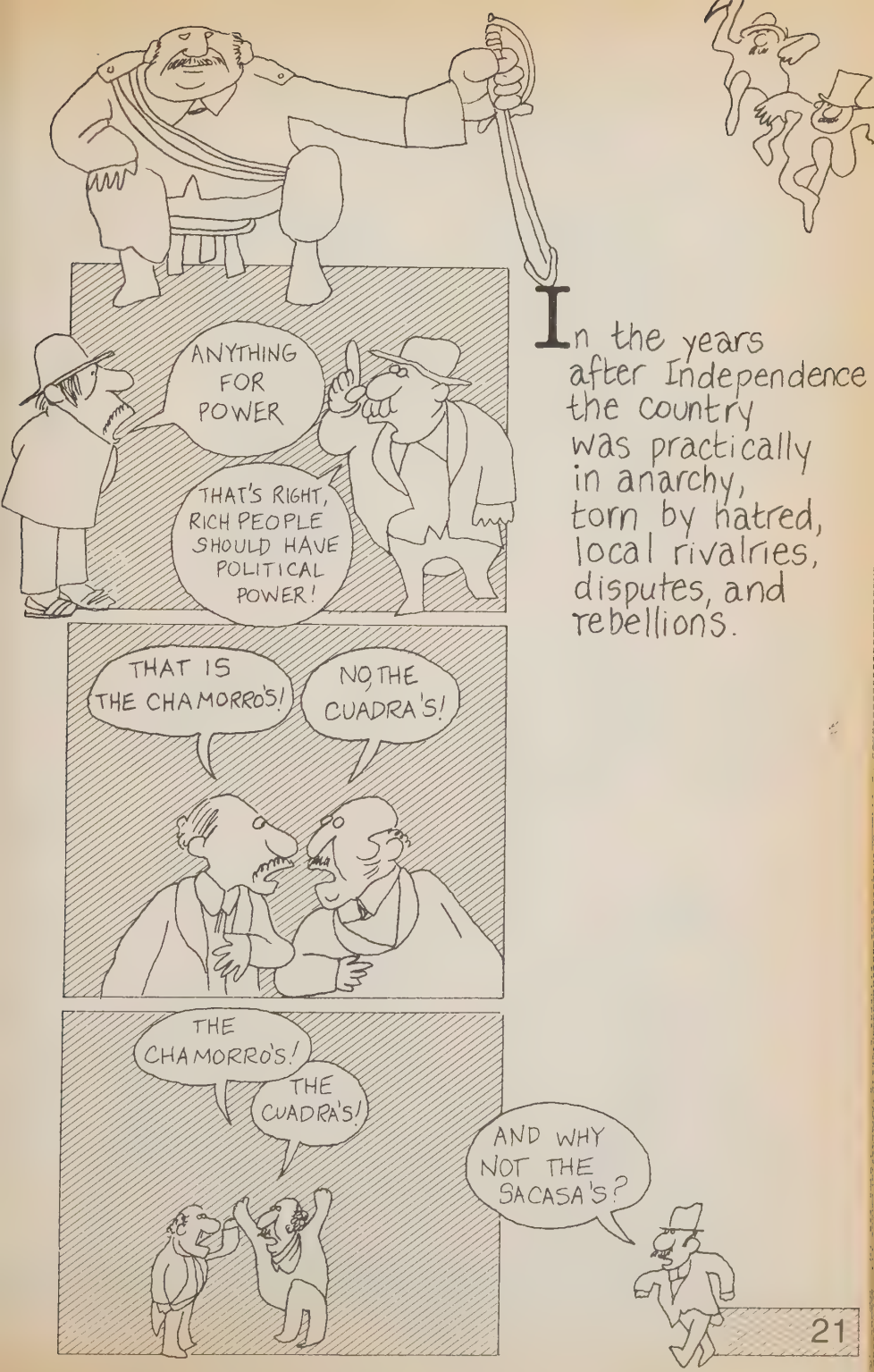


Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica decided to unite and form a republic, which only lasted for 15 years.

On April 30, 1838 the Nicaraguans decided to go it alone and founded the

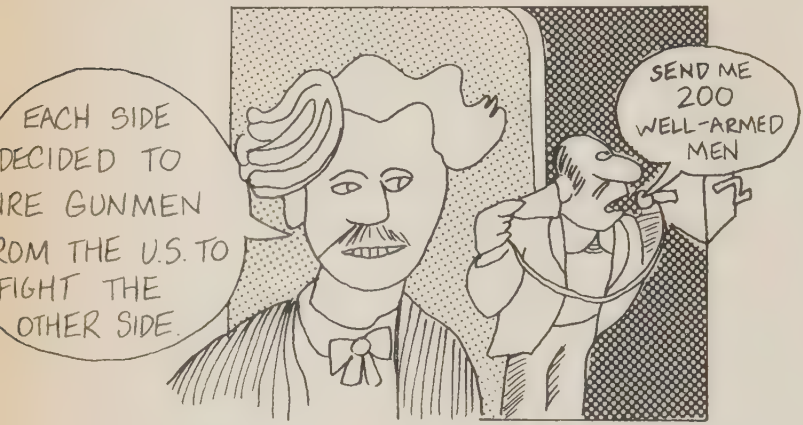


REPUBLIC of NICARAGUA

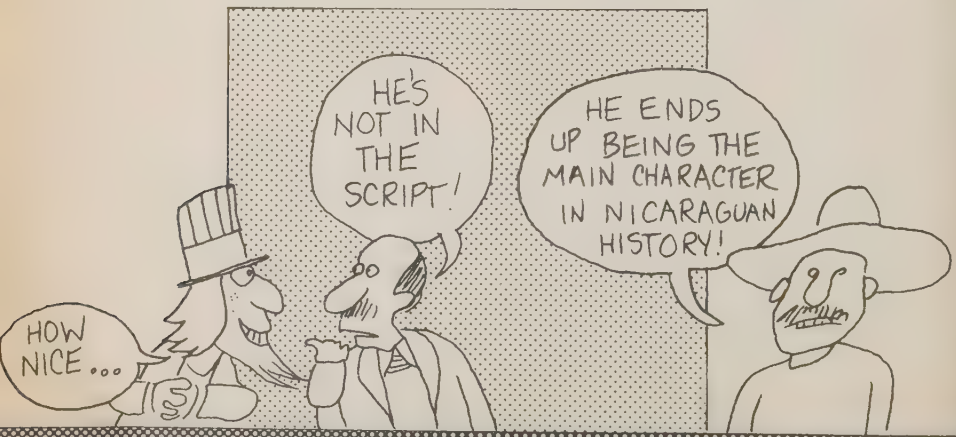


In the years after Independence the country was practically in anarchy, torn by hatred, local rivalries, disputes, and rebellions.

The first Nicaraguan leaders emerged from the power struggles between the best families of León and Granada.



Thus in 1855 Señor Castellón hired Mr. Byron Cole to supply 200 mercenaries while Señor Jerez hired 500 filibusters from Mr. Fisher.

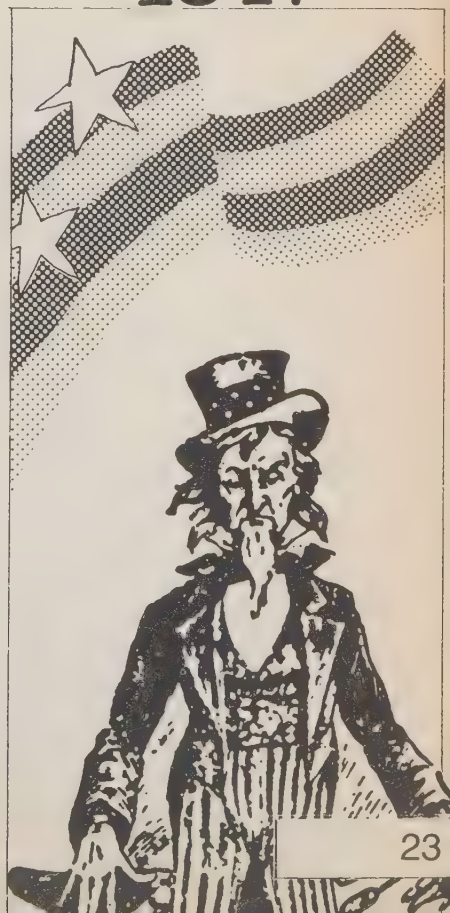


As we'll see...

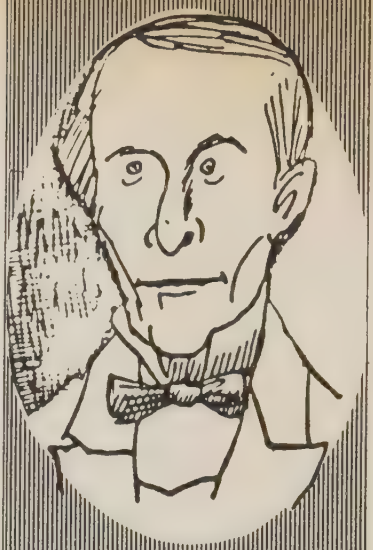
Taking advantage of Mexico's weakness, the Americans stole half of its territory...

1847

Since it was so easy to grab California, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Nevada, and Utah, the U.S. decided to pick up some more bargains, starting with Baja, California.

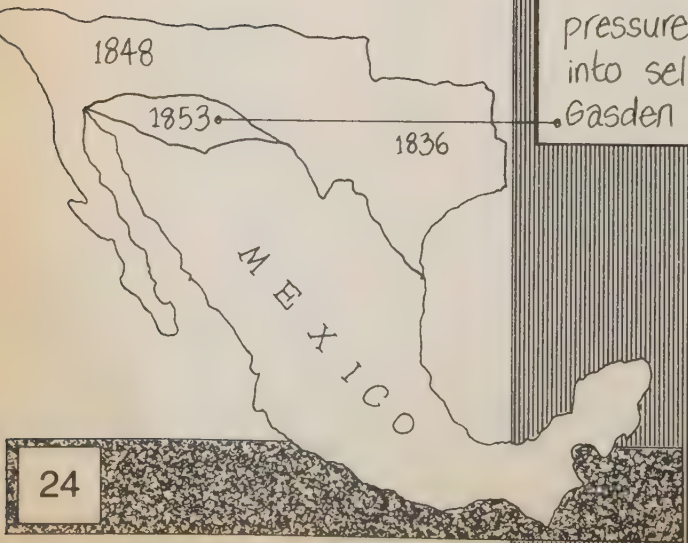


An adventurer named **WILLIAM WALKER** was sent to invade this strategic peninsula.

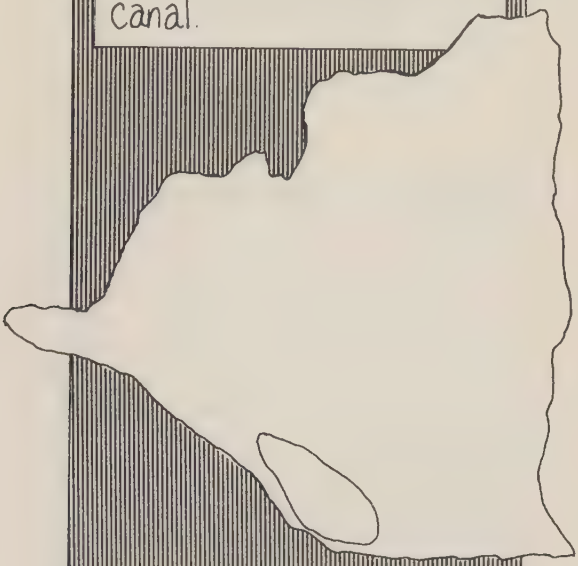


This pressured Mexico into selling the U.S. **THE GASDEN PURCHASE**

Only later was it learned that the real reason for Walker's invasion was to pressure Mexico into selling the Gasden purchase.



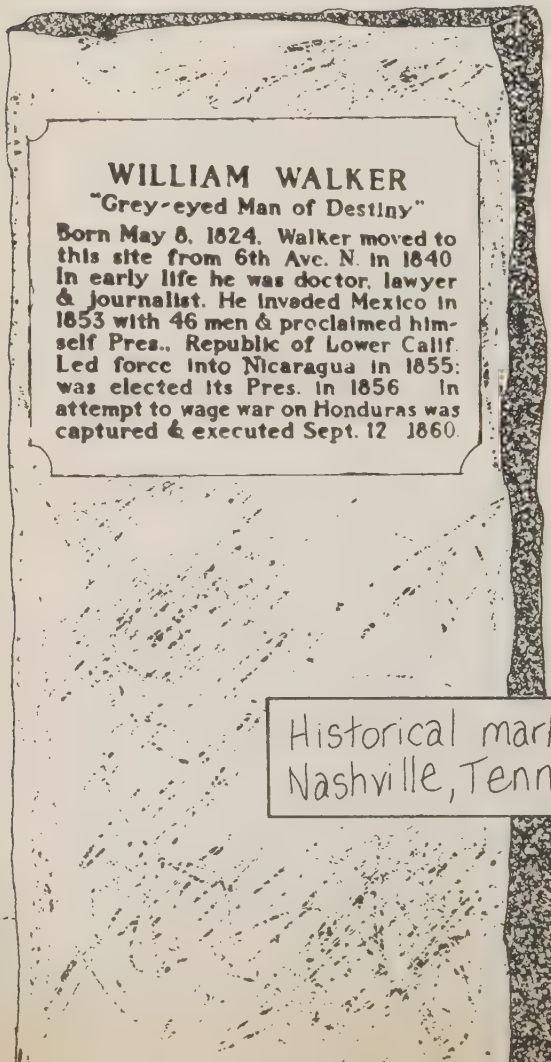
Since the Gasden affair was so successful, Walker was sent to Nicaragua, the most promising route for an interoceanic canal.



Shortly before Walker's arrival, an American millionaire, Cornelius Vanderbilt, obtained concessions to build a canal across Nicaragua and to establish an interoceanic passenger route.

From 1851 to 1856 Vanderbilt's company took 100,000 people across Nicaragua. When Walker arrived, he decided to replace Vanderbilt and become lord and master of Nicaragua.

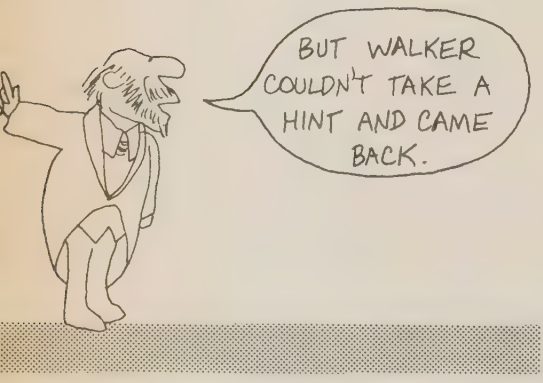
Walker assumed Mr. Cole's contract to supply mercenaries to Señor Castellón, and in June 1855 he arrived with his "volunteers."
A year passed, then Walker proclaimed himself President of Nicaragua.


WILLIAM WALKER
"Grey-eyed Man of Destiny"
Born May 8, 1824. Walker moved to this site from 6th Ave. N. in 1840 In early life he was doctor, lawyer & journalist. He invaded Mexico in 1853 with 46 men & proclaimed himself Pres., Republic of Lower Calif. Led force into Nicaragua in 1855; was elected its Pres. in 1856 In attempt to wage war on Honduras was captured & executed Sept. 12 1860.

Historical marker in Nashville, Tennessee

So the U.S. withdrew its support from Walker, who was already under pressure from the British who wanted the Canal route too.

And so England armed the Costa Ricans, after convincing them that Walker was dangerous. Costa Rica defeated the American pirate and the U.S. withdrew (temporarily) from Nicaragua: **1857.**

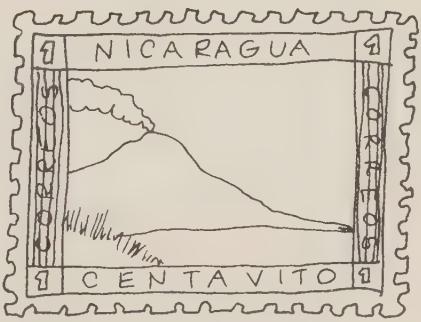


He suddenly showed up in November 1857, and seized the port of San Juan del Norte. Two months later the British ran him off.

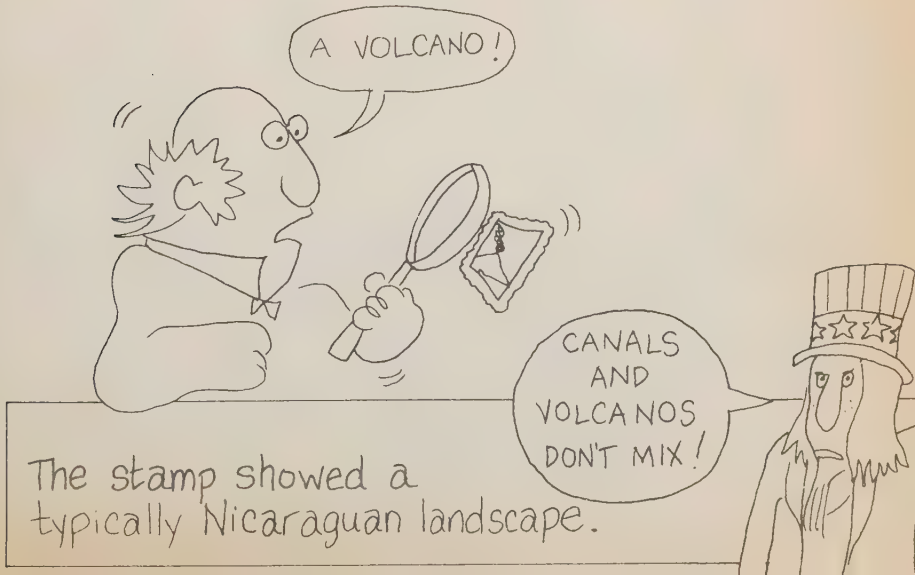
He came back again in 1860, this time to Honduras. There he was captured by the British and finally shot . . .

While England was meddling in Nicaragua, the U.S. had to stay on the sidelines.

Surprisingly enough it was a postage stamp which saved Nicaragua from having a Canal Zone.

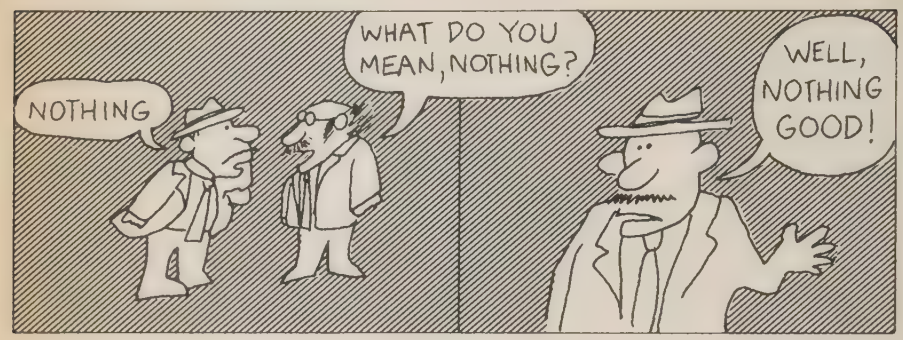


In 1902 each US senator received a copy of this 1899 Nicaraguan stamp.

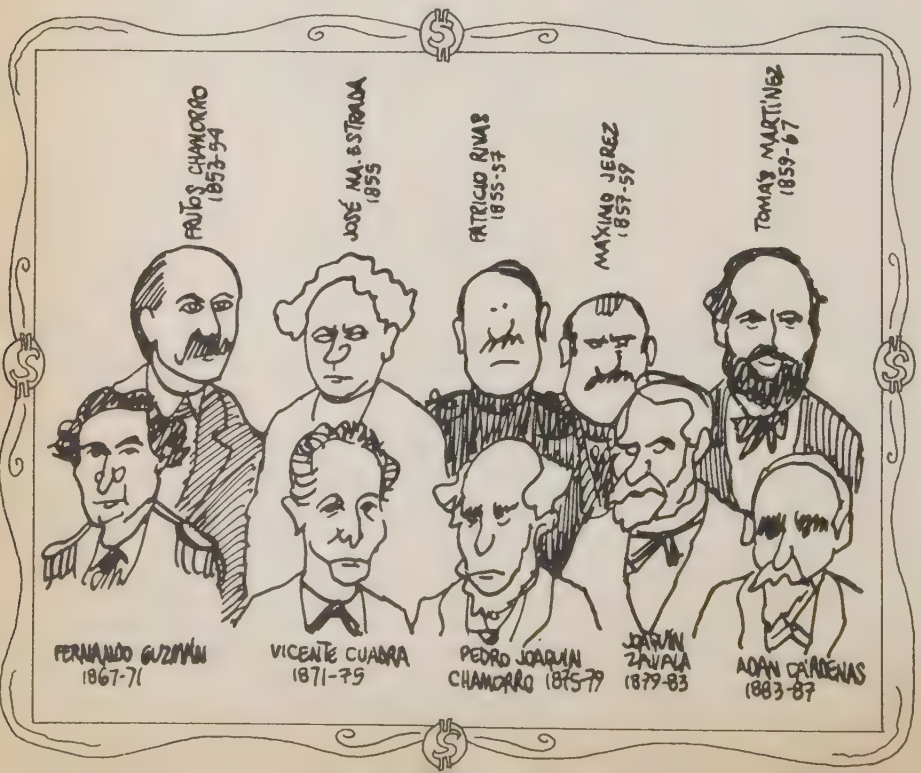


The stamp showed a typically Nicaraguan landscape.

But we're jumping ahead...
You might ask what happened in Nicaragua between 1850 and 1900...

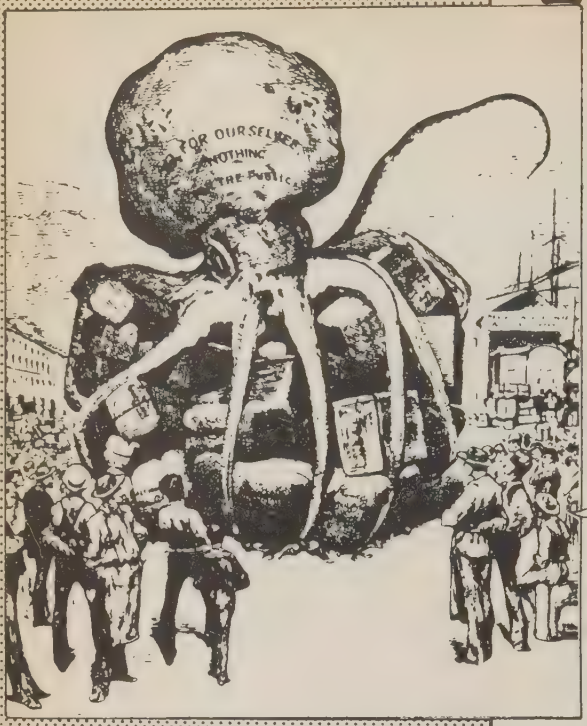


Nicaragua was stuck with a long string of aristocrats who took land from Indians and gave it to coffee planters and American investors.



Aristocrats from the city of Granada "governed" for over 50 years, keeping "order" and helping the rich get richer. The poor accepted their fate--being poor and exploited.

The presidency was only for those with the right surnames. The same families followed each other through the presidency. Even though they could barely read and write, these presidents could certainly sign treaties giving the country's wealth to foreigners who were even richer than they were.



The financial, military and religious oligarchies saw the U.S. as the model to follow, even though their only exposure to it was shopping trips to New Orleans and Miami.

CAPITALISM

A system in which, as its name implies, the only thing which matters is capital.

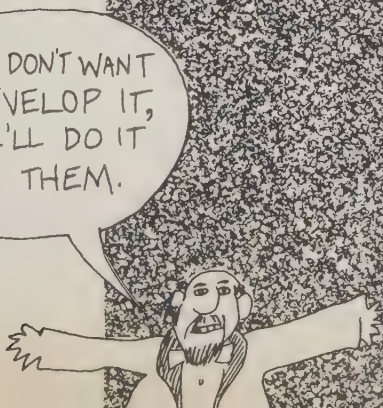
Granada's oligarchy was still living in the 18th century.

WE SHOULD RE-ESTABLISH SLAVERY!

It failed to understand the liberal reforms enacted in the United States to enable it to become a modern, productive nation.

The oligarchy did virtually re-establish slavery -- it took the Indians' rich, communally-owned lands...

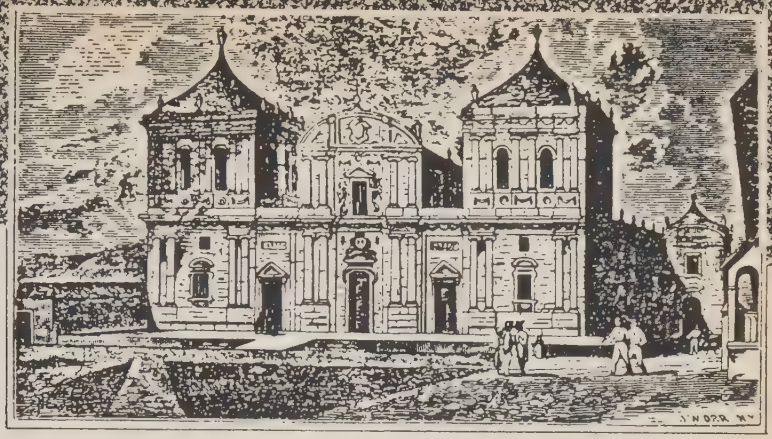
More than 7000 people died in the war which broke out in 1881 when the aristocracy took the Indians' communal lands for coffee plantations and lumbering.



Since the United States didn't have a Canal Zone in Nicaragua, the United Fruit Company created a banana zone in Nicaragua, and began exploiting peasants and exporting coffee, bananas, and other fruit.

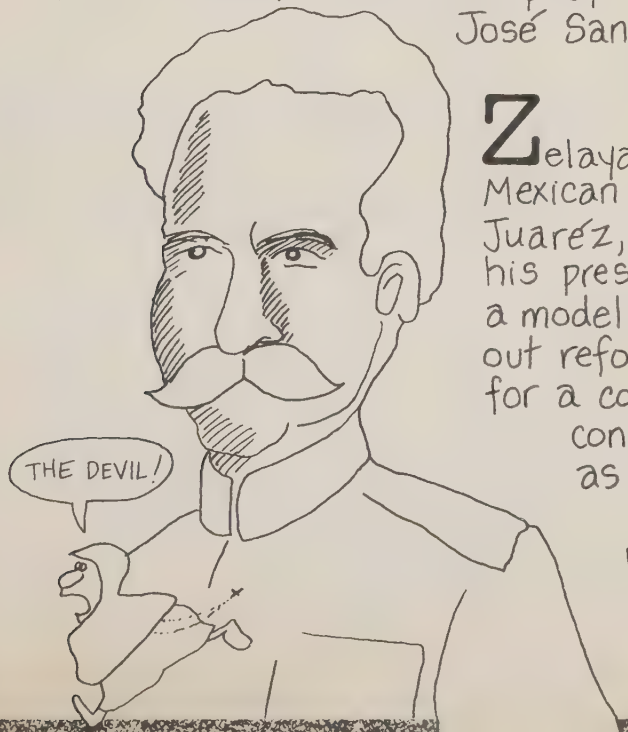
Working as a team, U.S. capitalists and local aristocrats made the original land-owners serfs on huge plantations.

They worked there for a pittance their entire lives, making the rich richer and giving birth to Nicaraguan capitalism.

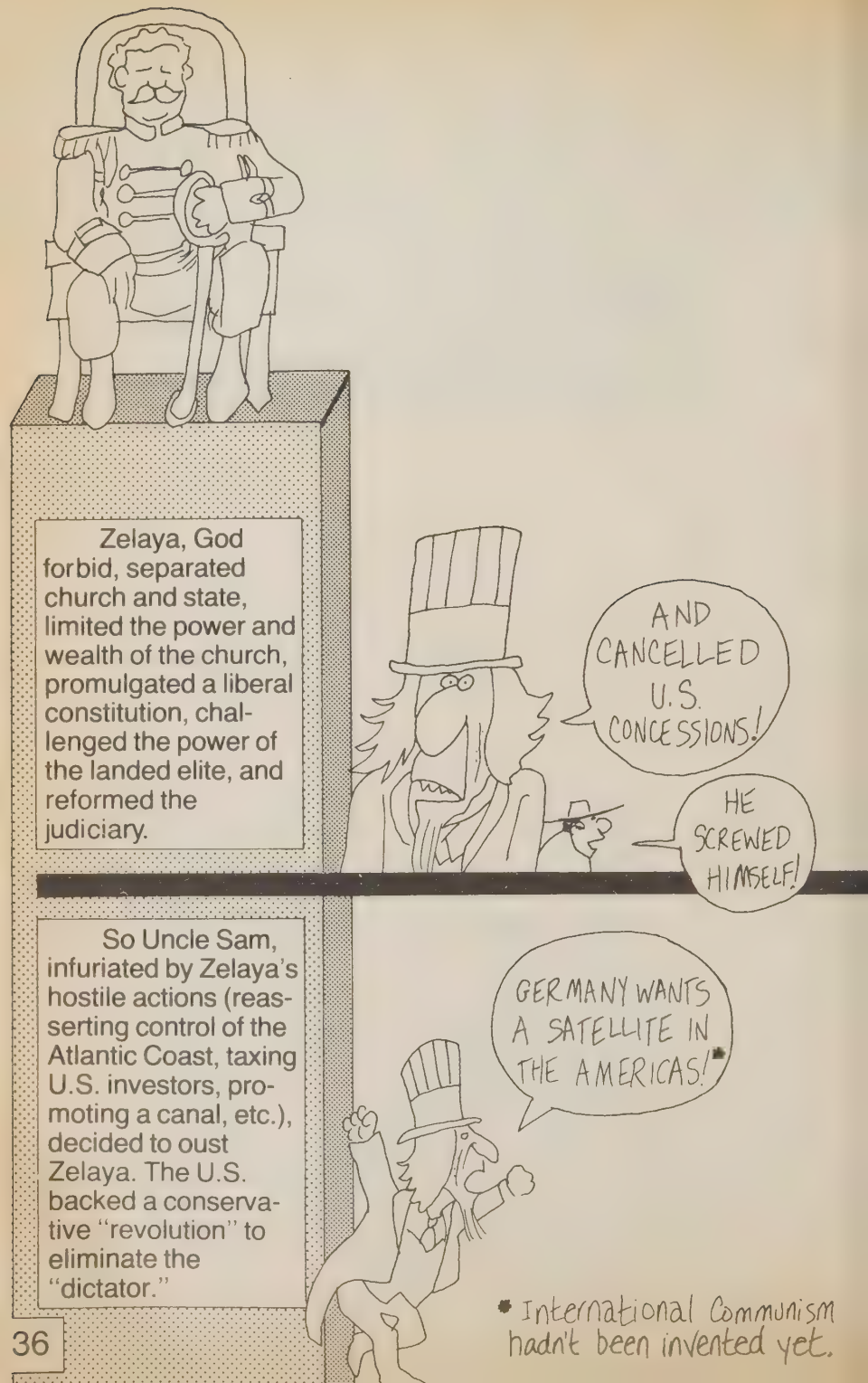


Cathedral of San Pedro, León

The oligarchy in the city of León was a little more progressive than its counterpart in Granada (they crossed themselves, but with the left hand). They took power in 1893 under the leadership of General José Santos Zelaya.



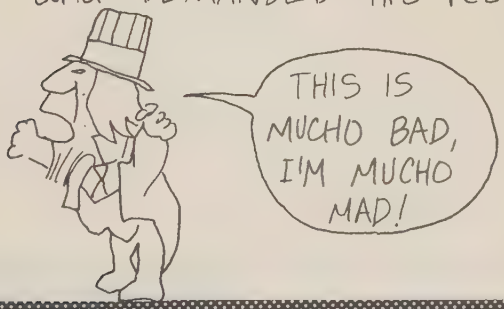
Zelaya admired Mexican President Juarez, and using his presidency as a model, he carried out reforms, which for a country as conservative as Nicaragua, was a real revolution.


Zelaya, God forbid, separated church and state, limited the power and wealth of the church, promulgated a liberal constitution, challenged the power of the landed elite, and reformed the judiciary.
AND CANCELLED U.S. CONCESSIONS!
HE SCREWED HIMSELF!
So Uncle Sam, infuriated by Zelaya's hostile actions (reasserting control of the Atlantic Coast, taxing U.S. investors, promoting a canal, etc.), decided to oust Zelaya. The U.S. backed a conservative "revolution" to eliminate the "dictator."
GERMANY WANTS A SATELLITE IN THE AMERICAS!*
* International Communism hadn't been invented yet.

AND SO:

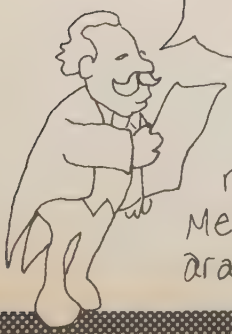
armed and backed by the U.S., two conservative generals, Estrada and Chamorro, rebelled against Zelaya, who comitted the error of shooting a pair of American spies, who had tried to blow up two Nicaraguan ships.

The United States, whose ships were already off the Nicaraguan coast, broke relations with Zelaya and DEMANDED his resignation.



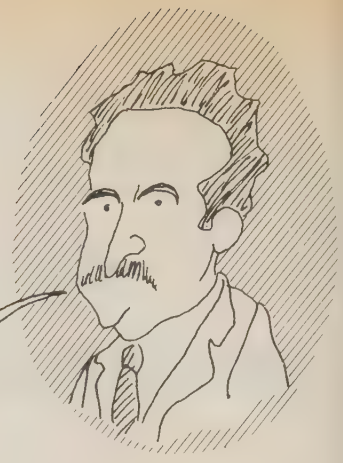
"... President of the United States no longer has confidence in and respect for President Zelaya. I am enclosing your passport in case you want to leave the country."

-Philander Knox, Secretary of state



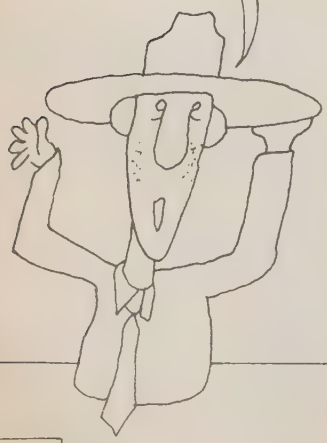
Needless to say, Zelaya had to resign. On Christmas Day, 1909, a Mexican boat rescued him from Nicaragua, much to Uncle Sam's displeasure.

When Zelaya resigned, the Nicaraguan Congress named another liberal, José Madriz, as president.



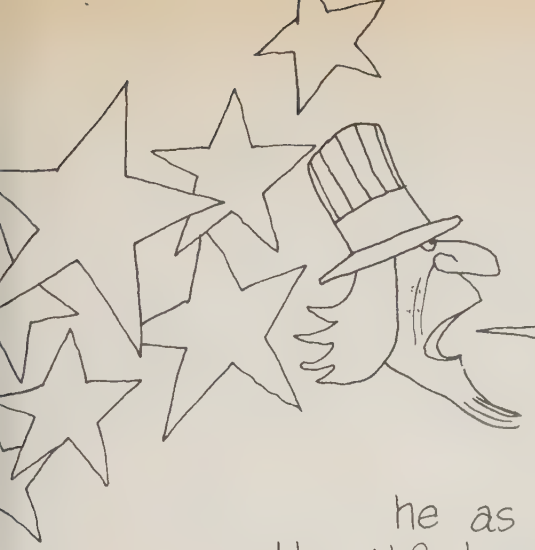
BUT THE GRINGOS DIDN'T LIKE HIM EITHER.

HE NOT ONLY ATTACKED THEM, BUT DECISIVELY DEFEATED THEM!



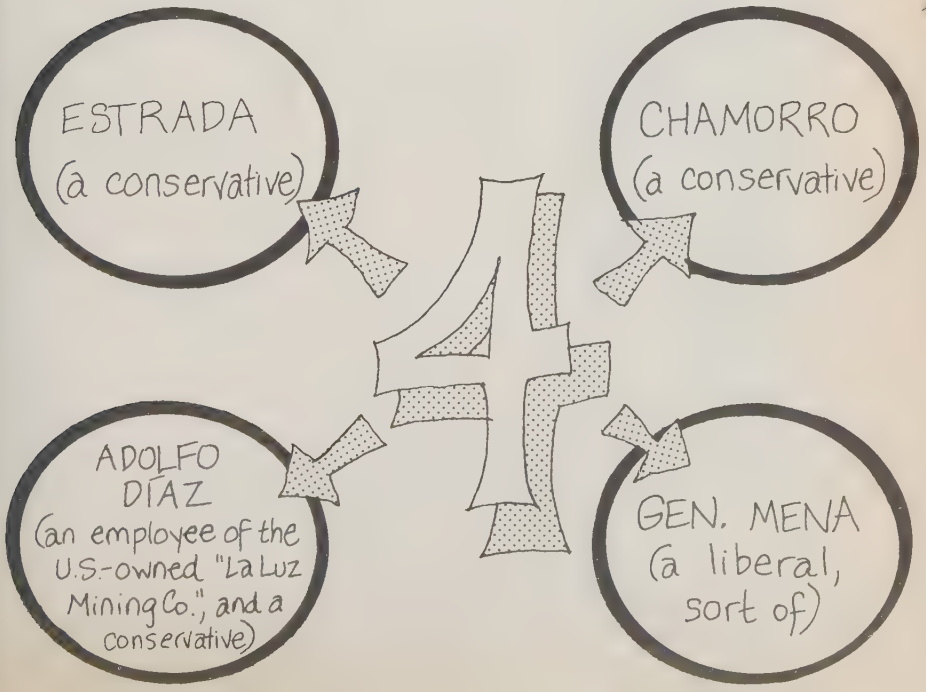
Knox declared he would not accept Madriz as president.

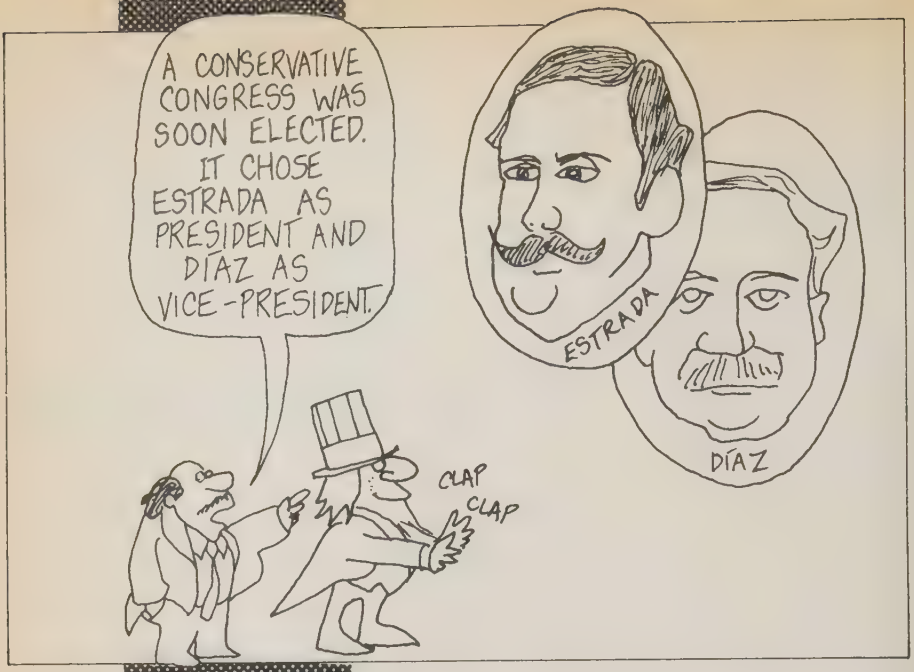
However, Madriz didn't pay any attention to him and attacked the conservative rebels.

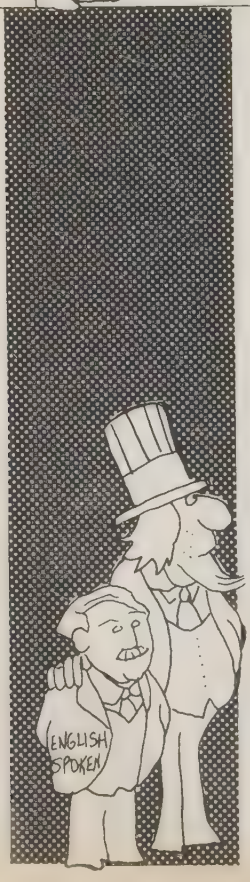


... to prevent the defeat of his beloved conservatives, Uncle Sam told Madriz that if he as much as touched the U.S. boats delivering arms to the conservatives, he would have to fight the U.S.

Madriz thus resigned on August 20, 1910 and the United States imposed a quadrumvirate (or however you spell it).



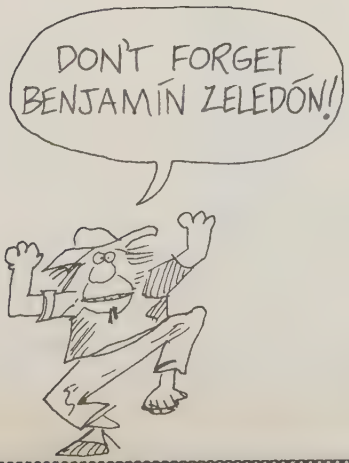




However, the real governors were Messieurs Weitzel and Dawson, who drafted legislation, signed reparation treaties, and issued economic directives. It was so disgusting that Estrada resigned, leaving Mr. Díaz in power.

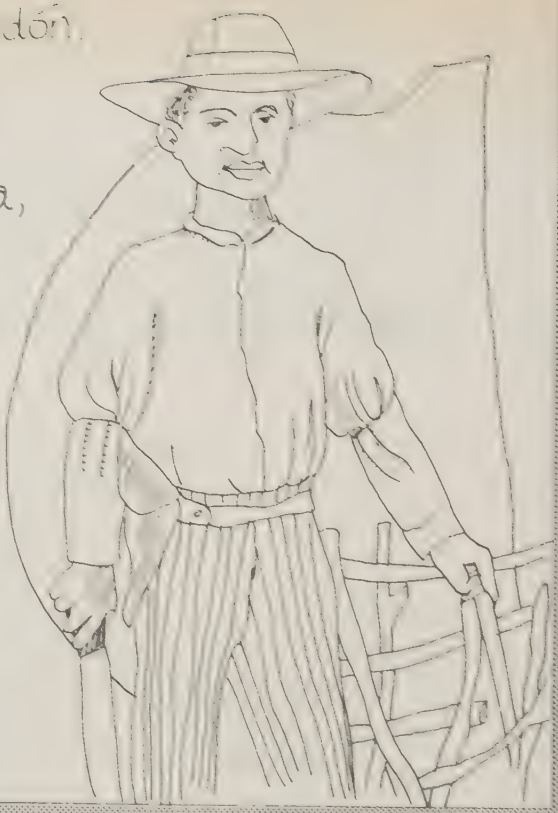
THUS
an obscure book-keeper became President of Nicaragua.

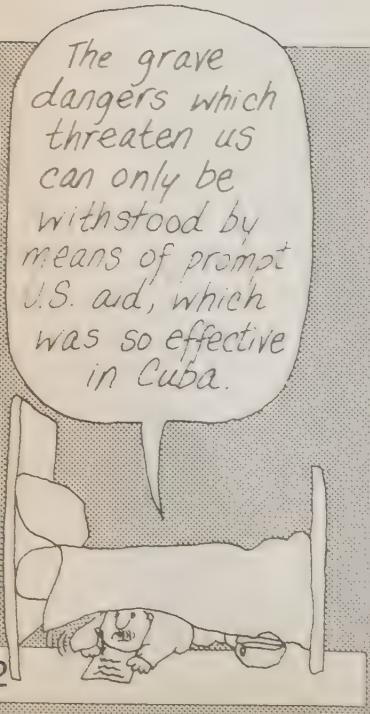
Within a few months he had mortgaged the country, and ceded the ports, customs revenues, railroads, and banks to the U.S. Finally even the conservative congress couldn't take it, so it named Gen. Mena as president. Not suprisingly the Americans didn't like him. When he tried to take power, he was defeated by U.S. troops supporting Gen. Chamorro, and had to flee the country.



WHO?

Benjamín Zeledón, a doctor, teacher and aide to General Mena, decided to stay in Nicaragua and fight the Americans and their puppet, Díaz, who immediately asked for U.S. troops saying:

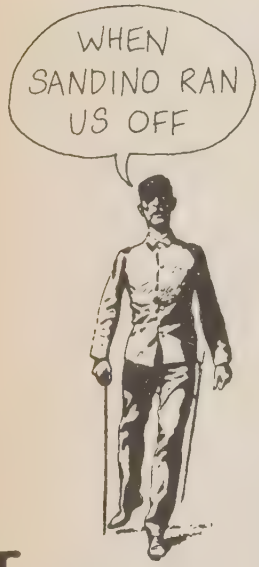




Thus to save democracy, the heroic U.S. Marines landed August 4, 1912 at the request of the traitor Díaz.

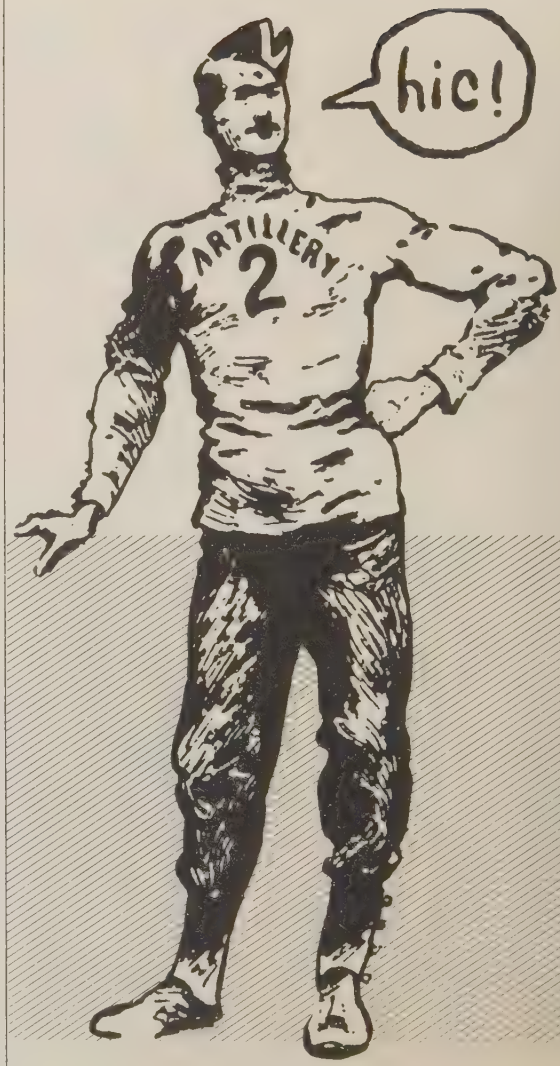
Zeledón entrenched his poorly armed forces in Masaya, where U.S. artillery bombed them for a day. Zeledón was then captured and shot. The rest of his force (more than 300 men) had their throats cut or were shot.

Nicaragua would remain under American occupation from 1912 until 1933.



In fact they were driven out by someone who as a boy saw the body of Benjamín Zeledón being taken to the cemetery:

AUGUSTO CÉZAR SANDINO.

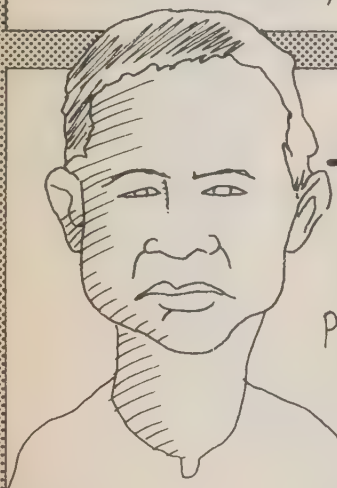


Chapter 2:

Sandino, the Father

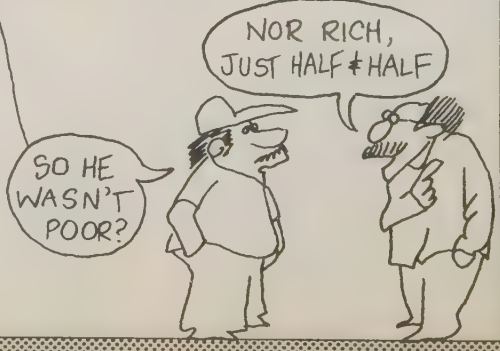
Augusto César Sandino was born May 19, 1895 in an Indian village named Niquinohomo.

Gregorio Sandino, his father, owned some land, and his mother, Margarita Calderón, was a peasant of Indian ancestry.



Augusto César* (this name reflects the Nicaraguan custom of giving children "different" names) attended primary school and studied some bookkeeping, since his father wanted him to administer his coffee plantations and other farms.

* Sandino's real name was Augusto Nicolás, according to his birth certificate.

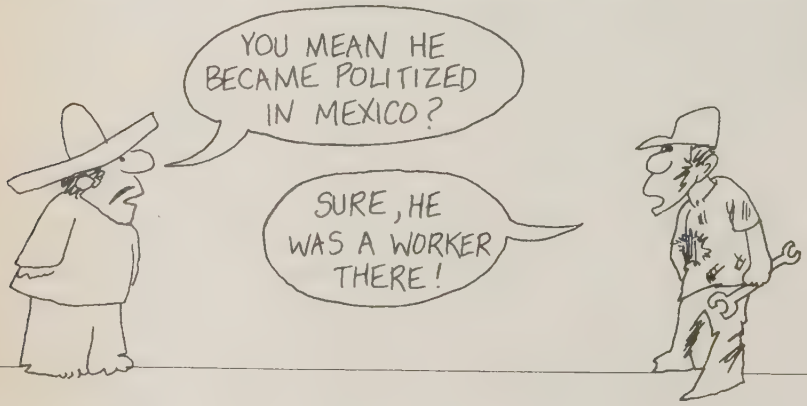


Birth certificate: Sandino signed his name Augusto C. Sandino. The "C" was for Calderón. Thus the confusion, having one name and being called something else.

In 1921 Sandino fled after wounding Dagoberto Rivas in a political dispute.

From 1921 to 1925 Sandino worked in Honduras and Guatemala for the United Fruit Company, and then in Mexico he worked for the South Penn. Oil Company.

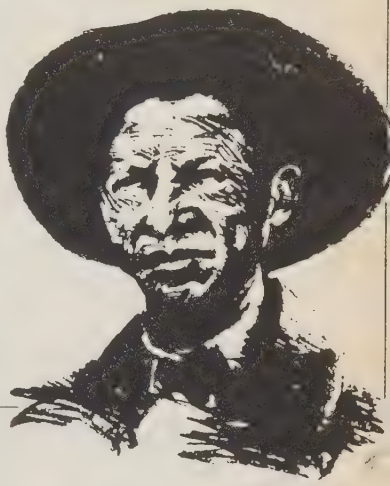
Later he was head of the gasoline sales department of the Huasteca Petroleum Company, also in Mexico.



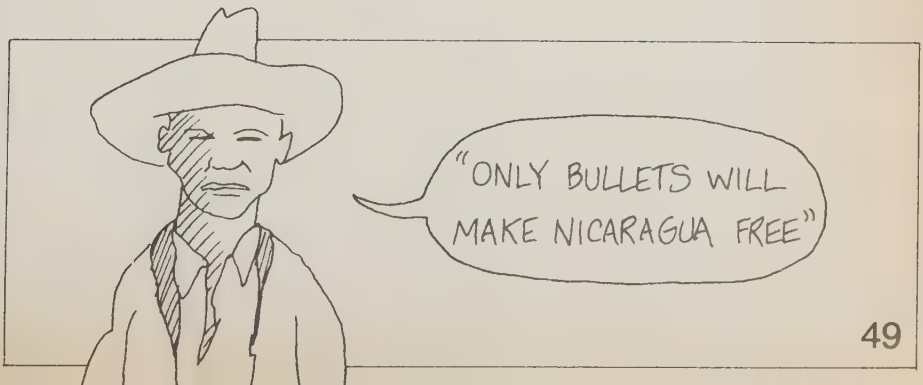
Strangely enough, working for the Americans, Sandino became aware of what imperialism was. At this time trade unions began struggling against the U.S. firms that owned Mexico's oil.

"About 1925 I decided everything in Nicaragua had gone sour and that honor had disappeared. At the same time my sincerity attracted a group of like-minded friends. Each day we would comment on the submission of our people before the advance, by treachery or force, of Yankee imperialism.

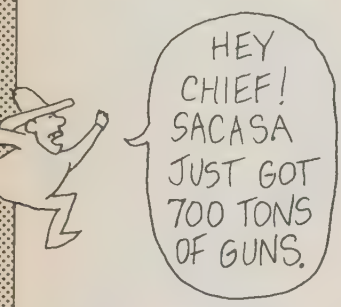
On one such day I said to my friends, if there were 100 honorable men who loved their country as I did, the absolute sovereignty of our country would be restored."



On May 16, 1926 Sandino quit his job, took the $3000 he had saved, and left for Nicaragua in search of 100 men who thought the way he did.

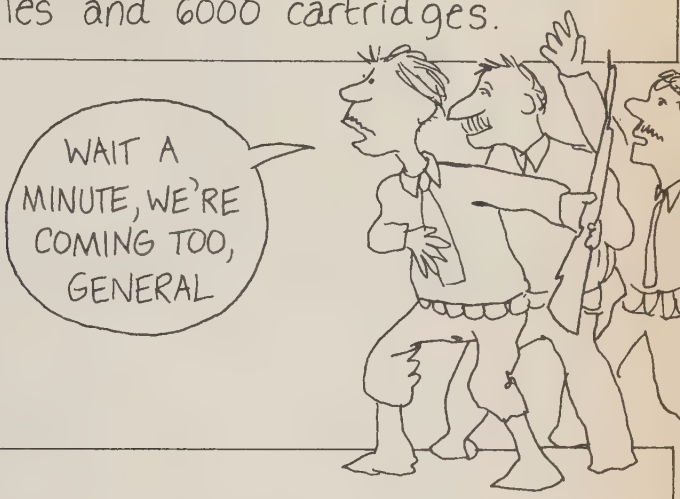


Sandino's first recruits were 29 exploited miners in San Albino. He bought his first guns and began "his" war against the United States.

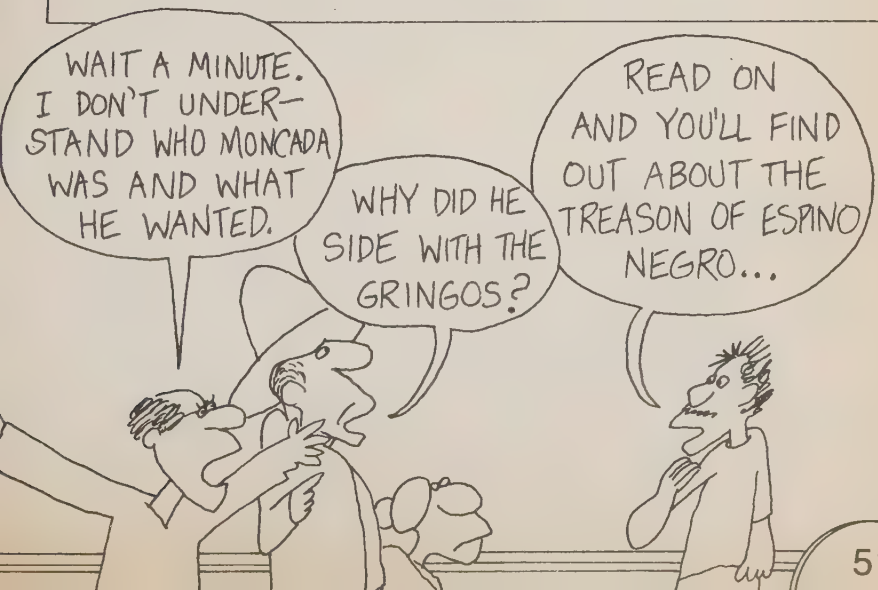


Sacasa was vice-president of Nicaragua. However the conservatives wouldn't let him "vice-govern." Sandino went to him for guns and he told Sandino to go to General Moncada, the army chief-of-staff.

Moncada rejected Sandino's request and Sacasa's guns were confiscated and thrown into the sea. With the help of some prostitutes, Sandino fished out 30 rifles and 6000 cartridges.

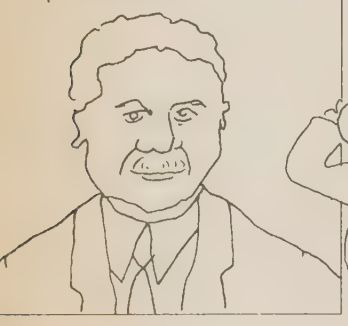


When they saw that Moncada was siding with the invaders, 200 soldiers joined Sandino, ready to fight by his side to get rid of the American troops.


WAIT A MINUTE. I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHO MONCADA WAS AND WHAT HE WANTED.
WHY DID HE SIDE WITH THE GRINGOS?
READ ON AND YOU'LL FIND OUT ABOUT THE TREASON OF ESPINO NEGRO...

1926

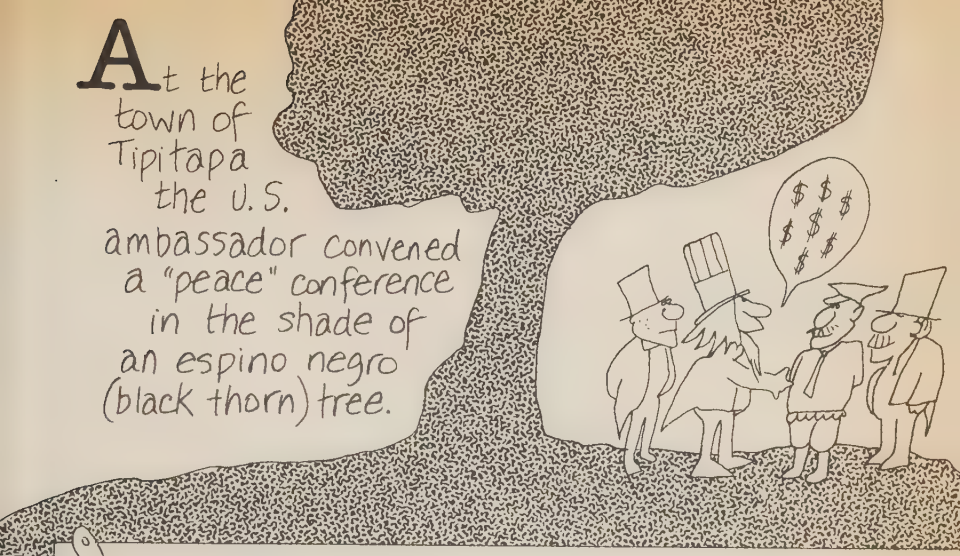
Adolfo Díaz, the last conservative president, took power and was recognized by the U.S.



The liberal Juan Bautista Sacasa protested and proclaimed himself president. Moncada headed his army and Mexico even recognized his government.

Sandino joined the liberals and fought with Moncada. They almost beat the conservatives. But when they were about to take Managua, the U.S. cavalry arrived.

At the town of Tipitapa the U.S. ambassador convened a "peace" conference in the shade of an espino negro (black thorn) tree.



There Moncada betrayed Sacasa and agreed to lay down his arms, thus letting Díaz stay on as president until his term was over in 1928.

Then there were to be elections in which Moncada would be the liberal candidate.

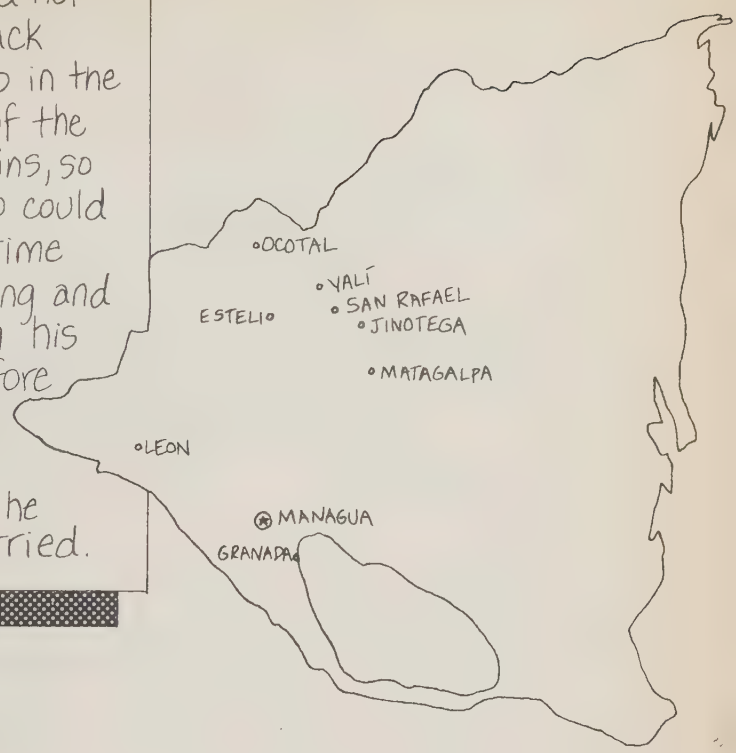
As U.S. Ambassador Stimson's translator we find a "friendly young liberal, frank and agreeable" named ANASTASIO SOMOZA GARCÍA. The peace treaty provided for a national guard, organized separately from the army to protect the president and his government from abuses by the army. The guard was to be trained, led and armed by the Americans.

This betrayal started Sandino thinking:

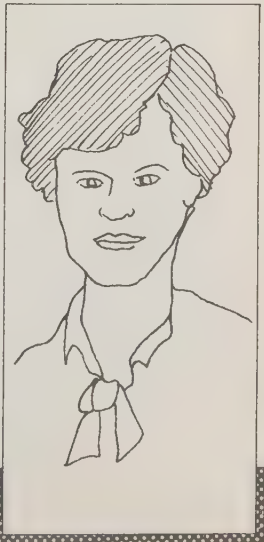
"I knew that Moncada had betrayed the interests of the revolution and I also bitterly resented the betrayal of the ideals of the Nicaraguan people. I couldn't remain indifferent to the traitor's actions. I remembered at this time how they made fun of Nicaraguans in the rest of the world. I spent three days in the Sierra del Común, sad and depressed. I didn't know whether to surrender my arms or defend my country, which was in such need of love from its people. I broke this chain of thought and decided to fight, feeling I had been called on to protest the betrayal of Nicaragua and its ideals. My bullets would be the only ones which would defend Nicaraguan sovereignty. There was no reason for the United States to interfere in our family affairs. That was when I published my first manifesto."

Thus Sandino refused to lay down his arms.

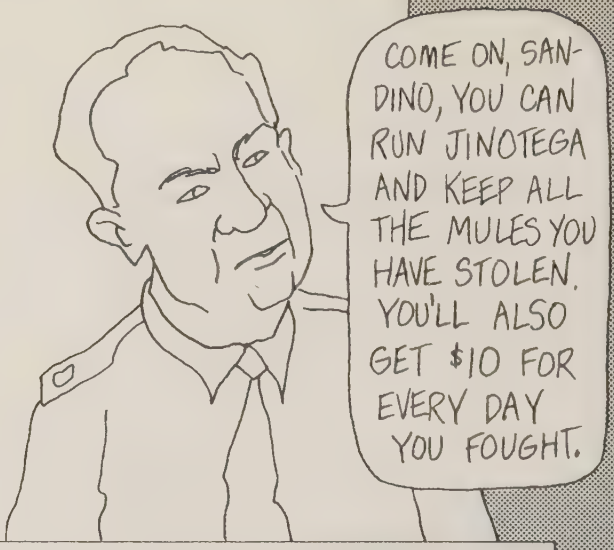
Moncada preferred not to attack Sandino in the heart of the mountains, so Sandino could spend time organizing and training his men. Before going into combat he got married.



On the 28th of May, 1927, between bursts of machine-gun fire, Sandino took as his wife Blanca Arauz, the telegraph operator of San Rafael. She became active in her husband's struggle.

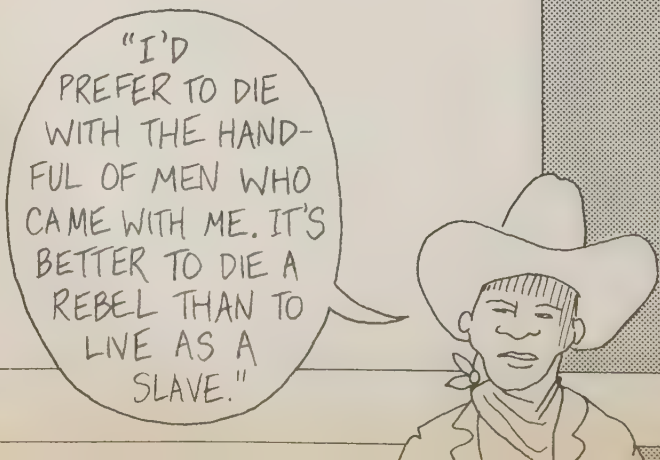


Moncada called Sandino and tried to convince him.



He was later offered $100,000.

Sandino rejected the traitor's offer and withdrew to Jinotega with his 300-man force.



Moncada indignantly advanced on Jinotega to capture Sandino, who fled to Yalí.

DAMN IT, WE'LL GO WITH SANDINO.

On July 12, 1927, Sandino received an ultimatum signed by U.S. marine captain Hatfield, who was stationed in El Ocotal with 700 men.

It was surrender or else.

GUARD BARRACKS

Sandino answered the fair marine captain:

Chipote Camp
(near San Fernando)
TO Captain G.D. Hatfield
El Ocotal

I received your message yesterday and read it. I will not surrender and I await you here. Patria libre o morir.* I am not afraid of you. The patriotism those who accompany me is my strength.

Sandino

*A free country or death.

Instead of waiting for the Americans, Sandino decided to attack them in their lair. He rounded up and armed all the peasants he could find. With this new force of 800 he captured the entire town of Ocotal, except for the barracks.

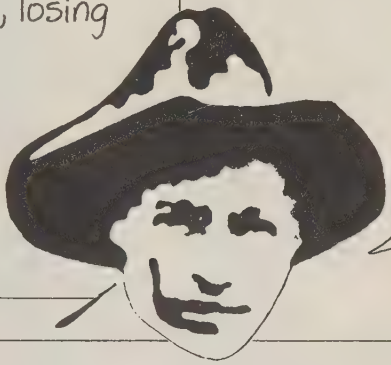
THERE 40 GRINGOS AND 70 GUARDSMEN WERE ENTRENCHED.

As they were attacking the barracks, something Sandino and the peasants hadn't thought of appeared:

U.S. AIR POWER

The planes bombed the town and machine-gunned innocent peasants, killing at least 300, including women and children. Sandino was forced to withdraw. President Coolidge later entertained and decorated the pilots, praising their "heroic military action."

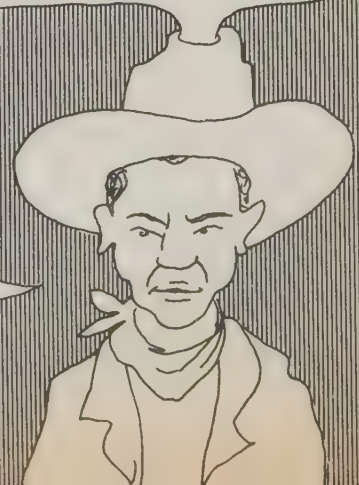
After the defeat at El Ocotal, Sandino was defeated again at San Fernando. On the 27th he suffered still another defeat at Las Flores, losing almost all his arms and 70 men... a disaster!



"We are alone. Nicaragua's cause has been forgotten. From now on our enemy won't be the forces of the tyrant Díaz, but the marines of the most powerful empire in history. We will fight against them. We will be ruthlessly killed by bombs dropped from the air, stabbed by foreign bayonets, and shot by modern machine-guns." *Nicaragua will triumph

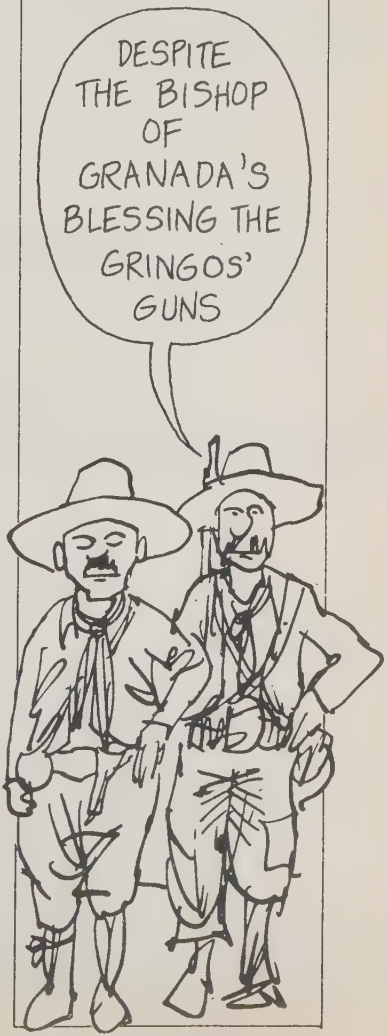
NICARAGUA* VENCERA

Sandino learned quickly and withdrew to El Chipote, where he built his forces and tried another type of warfare, which would be more favorable to him and the peasants.



The jungle and the people of the Segovias in northern Nicaragua protected Sandino, who decimated the invaders with guerrilla tactics.

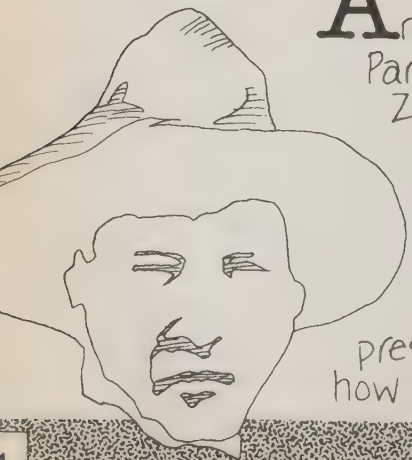
The holy mother church's sympathies were not with the guerrillas, but with the American invaders and their National Guard collaborators. In fact Sandino and his peasant guerrillas struggled not only against U.S. troops, but against the entire Nicaraguan government and the three pillars which upheld it: the church, the army and the oligarchy.



Since by this time the world press was controlled by the U.S., it called the Sandinistas "cruel assassins, pillagers, adventurers and rapists with dark instincts, drunken, bloodthirsty agressors, enemies of peace, order and democracy."

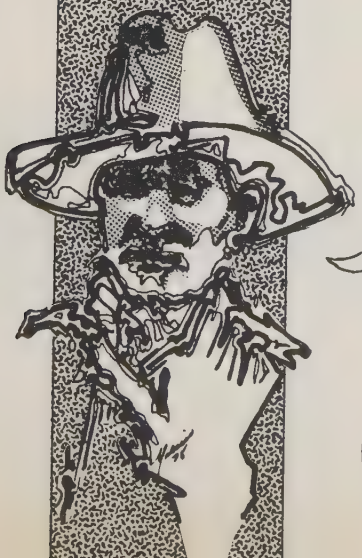
ND
INST
RIALIST
AGANDA!

IT'S GOOD I NEVER LEARNED TO READ.



And just as they did with Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, they portrayed Sandino as an illiterate, psychopathic killer whose death would be a blessing for Nicaragua. You can read the Mexican press from 1910 to 1917 to see how similar the reporting was.

Sandino went to Mexico to ask for arms and aid but Mexican president Portes Gil, at the request of U.S. ambassador Morrow, refused to let him come any further than Mérida, Yucatán. Sandino returned, disillusioned with the Mexican "revolutionaries."



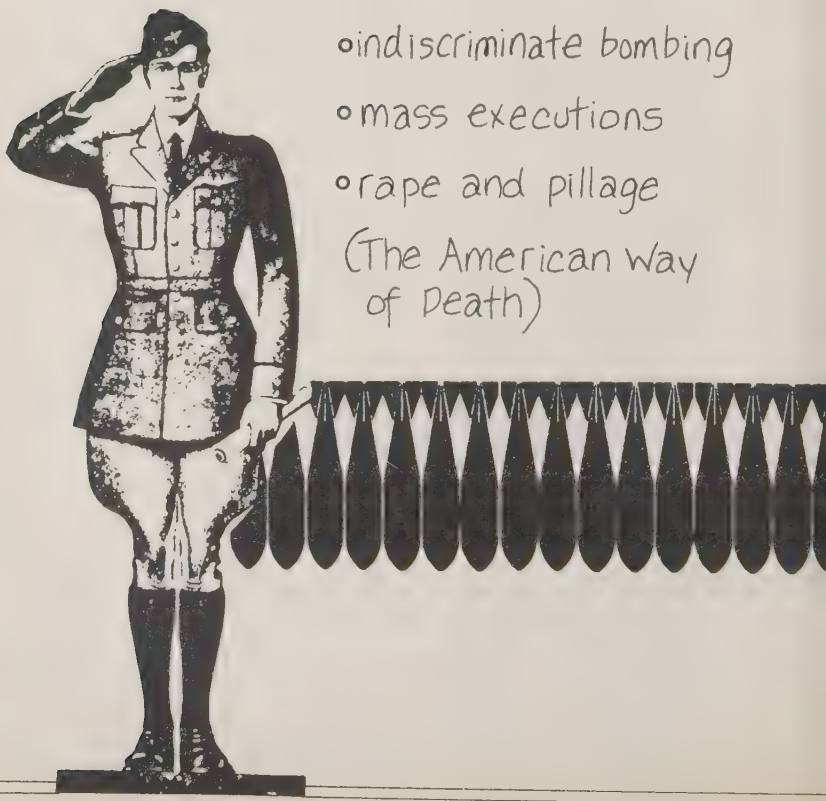
(Mexico only made up for this in 1978)

What you won't find in the press at the time are detailed accounts of crimes committed by the Americans, the terror imposed on the civilian population to stop them from supporting Sandino.

In 1930 the Americans did to Nicaragua what they were to do in Vietnam in 1970.

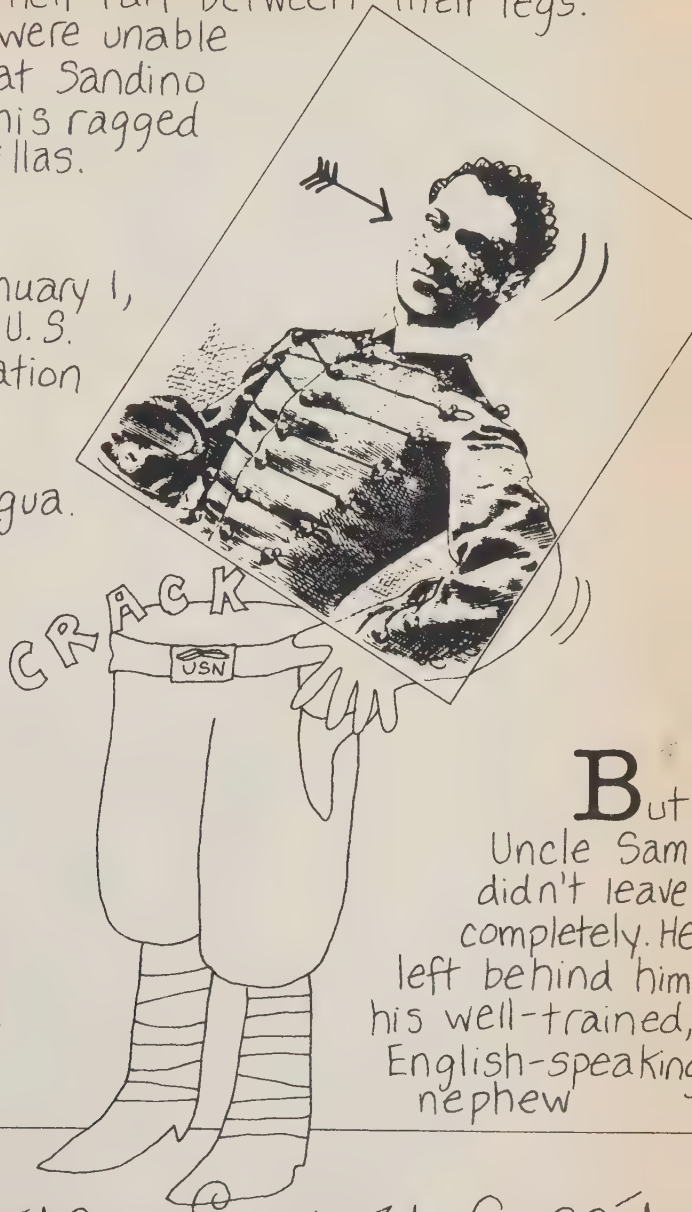
- towns leveled
- relocation camps
- indiscriminate bombing
- mass executions
- rape and pillage

(The American Way of Death)



They left Nicaragua just as they left Vietnam with their tail between their legs. They were unable to beat Sandino and his ragged guerrillas.

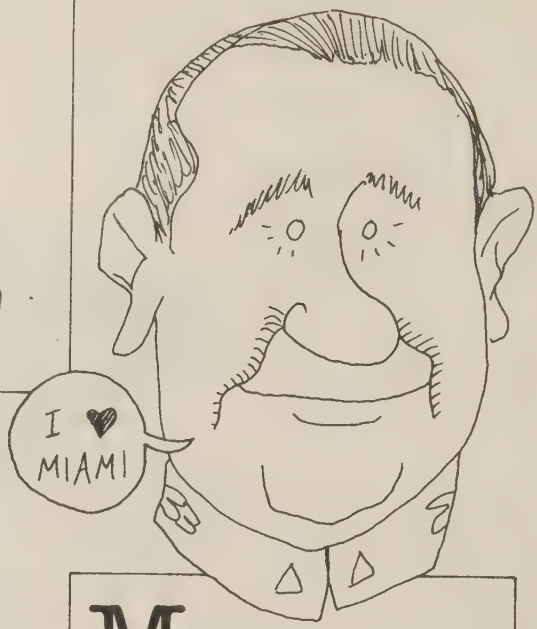
On January 1, 1933, U.S. occupation forces left Nicaragua.



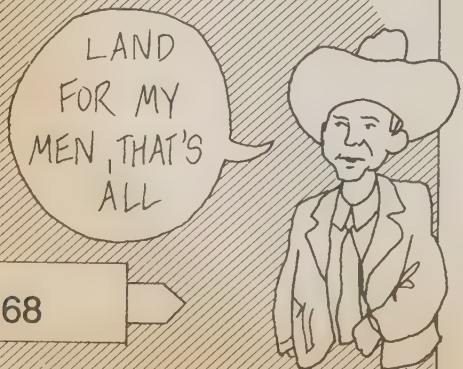
But Uncle Sam didn't leave completely. He left behind him his well-trained, English-speaking nephew

ANASTASIO SOMOZA GARCÍA

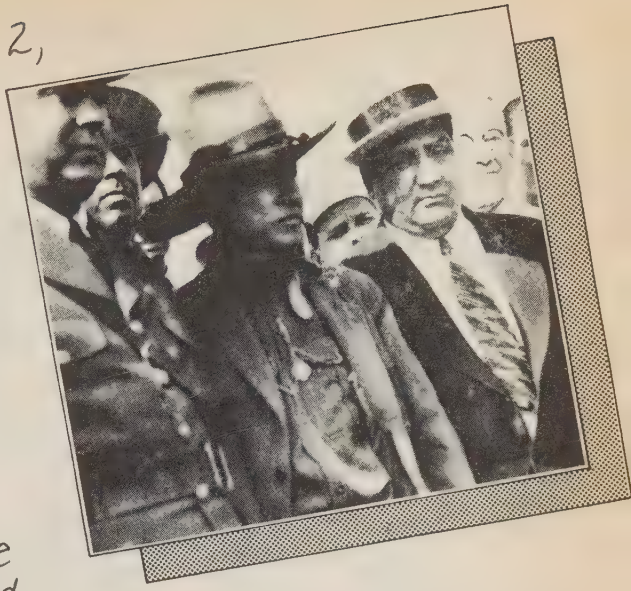
On the first of January, 1933, General Matthews transferred the command of the National Guard from himself to Major Anastasio Somoza, the lover of the U.S. ambassador's wife, pro-American to his heart.



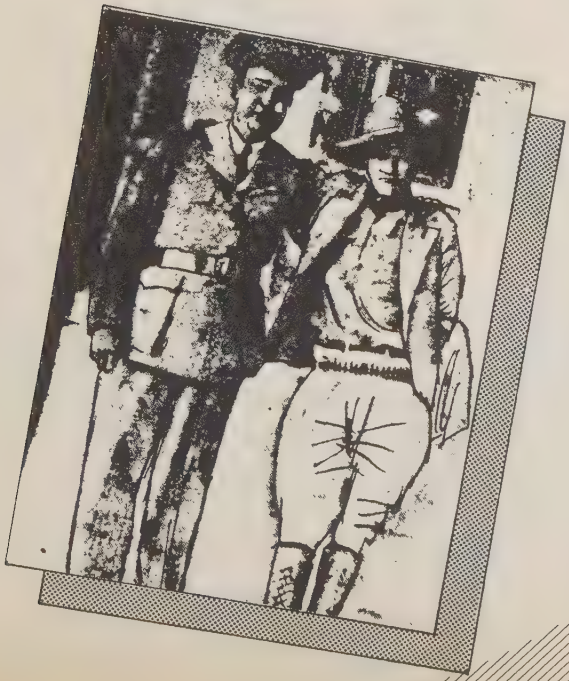
Moncada, the traitor, had been replaced by Sacasa. After the Americans had left, President Sacasa asked Sandino to lay down his arms so the country would be at peace. Sandino accepted with certain conditions and guarantees.



On February 2, 1933, Sacasa and Sandino signed a peace treaty which recognized Sandino's patriotic actions, stopped the fighting and promised land for Sandino's men.

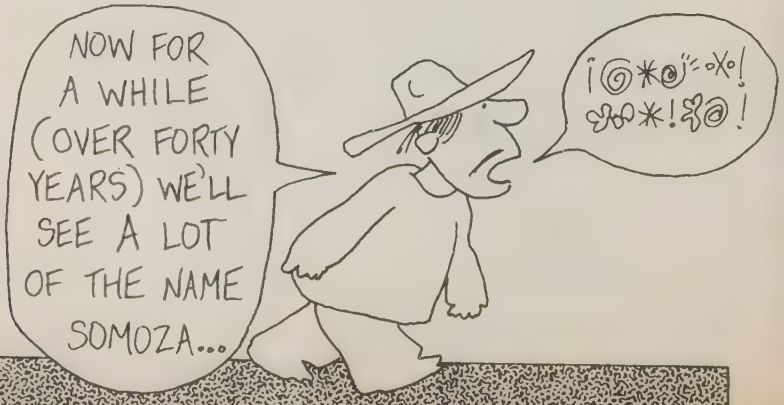


They embraced as a sign of peace, an embrace which included the real ruler of Nicaragua, National Guard Chief Anastasio Somoza.



AUGUSTO NASTASIO AS ANDINO OMOZA

In the future the destiny of these two men (and of all Nicaragua) would be intimately linked. Nicaragua is Somoza and Sandino, two names synonymous with Nicaragua.

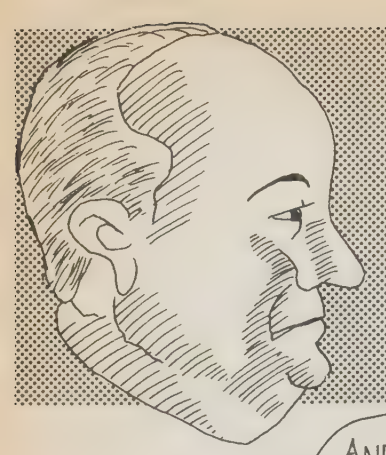


Chapter 3:

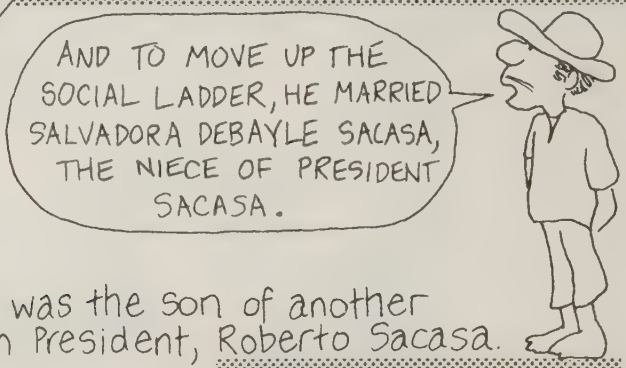
MAJOR GENERAL ANASTASIO SOMOZA

for the Nicaraguans, the biggest son-of-a...

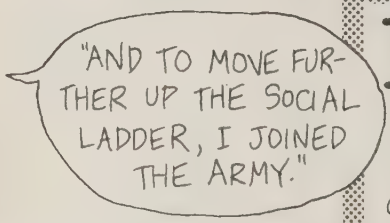
The Somoza Era



Anastasio Somoza García was born in San Marcos, a town near Niquinohomo, in 1896. His family was well off.

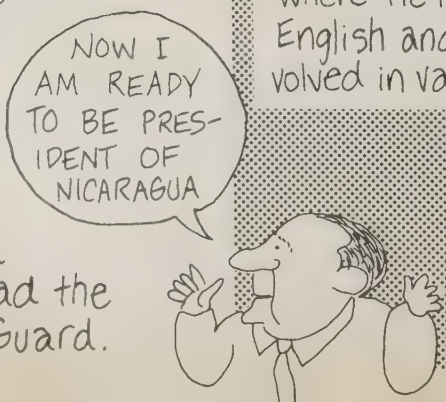


Who himself was the son of another Nicaraguan President, Roberto Sacasa.



Before he joined the army he was a used car dealer and health inspector. He had traveled to the United States, where he learned English and got involved in various scams.

Knowing where his political future lay, he became the lover of Mrs. Hanna, who had recommended him to head the National Guard.



So when the Americans were defeated by Sandino, their interests were well protected with Somoza heading the National Guard.

BUT SANDINO IS STILL ALIVE, DAMN IT!

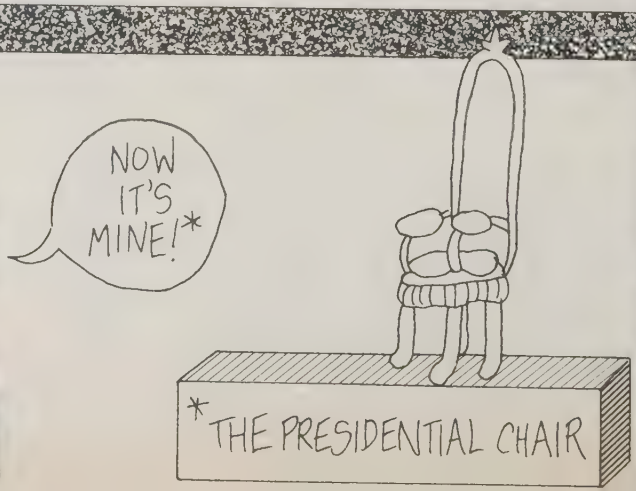
Somoza and Arthur Bliss Lane, who was the formal United States ambassador, met to discuss the problem presented by a living Sandino...

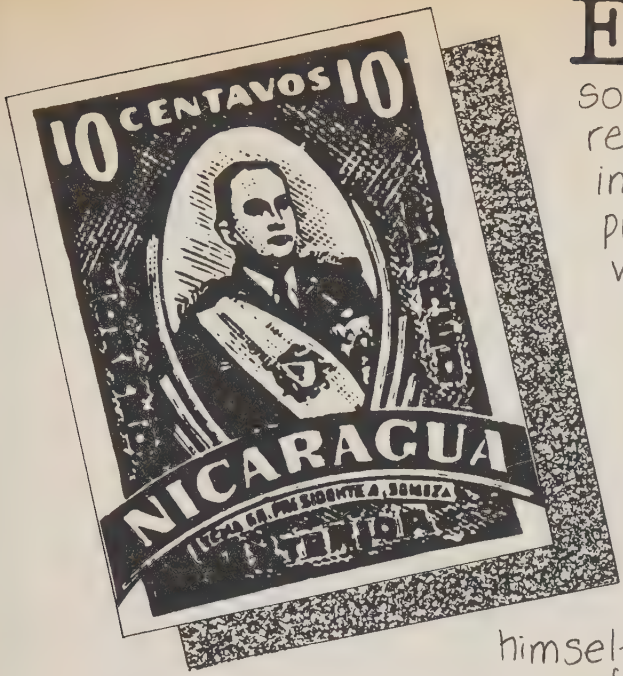
As a result, on the night of Feb. 21, 1934, the National Guard stopped Sandino and 3 of his aides as they were leaving the National Palace and riddled them with bullets. This was done on the direct orders of Anastasio Somoza, who then saw nothing blocking his path to power.

In the days following the assassination, the National Guard killed over 300 prominent Sandinistas. This enraged President Sacasa, since all this was going on behind his back.

Sacasa tried to control the Guard and oust Somoza, but Somoza moved first.

On June 6, 1936, Sacasa was forced to resign by the Guard, which had besieged the Presidential Palace. He left the country in an American plane and asked for asylum in El Salvador.

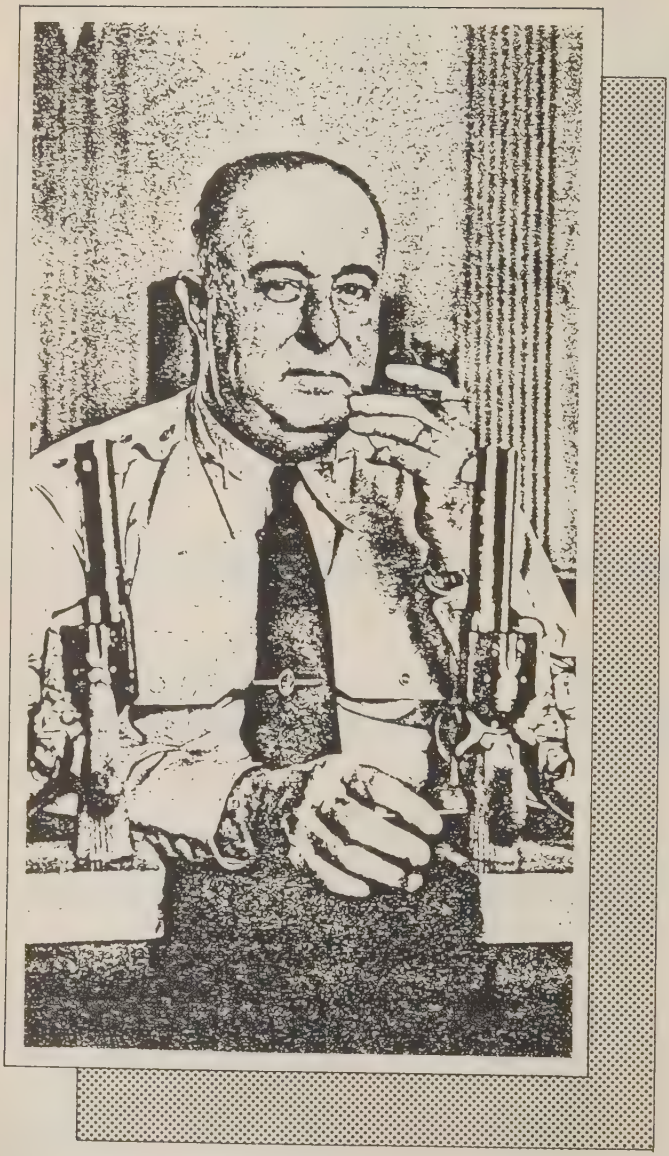




Elections were soon called to replace the interim president, who was designated by Somoza.

On January 1, 1937 Nicaragua woke up to a new president, who appointed himself Commander of the Guard:

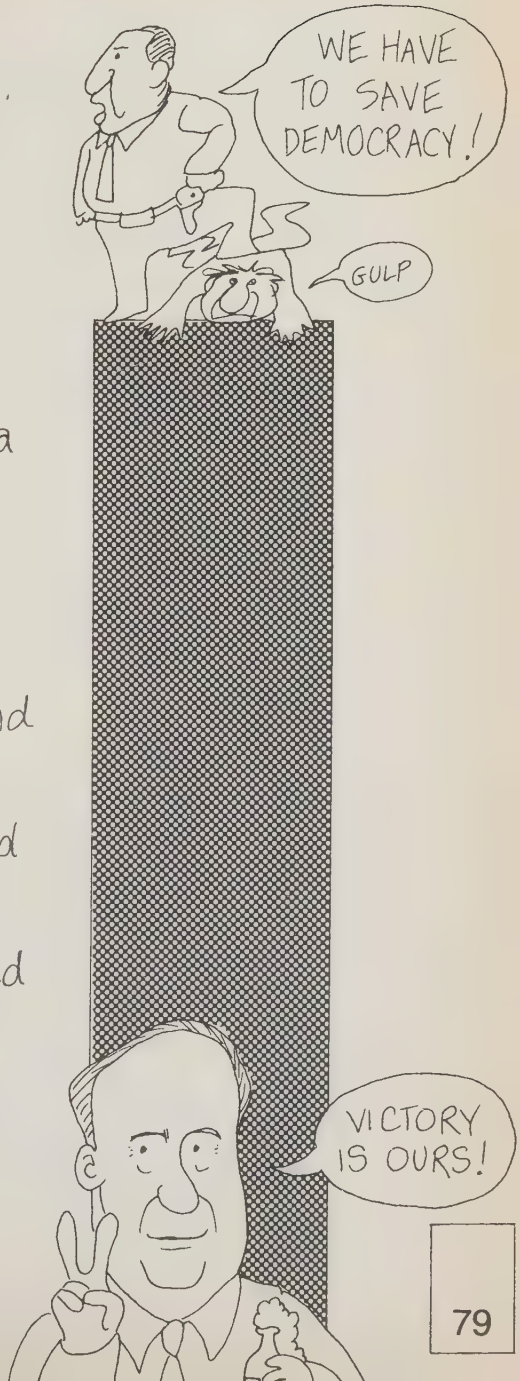
ANASTASIO SOMOZA GARCÍA



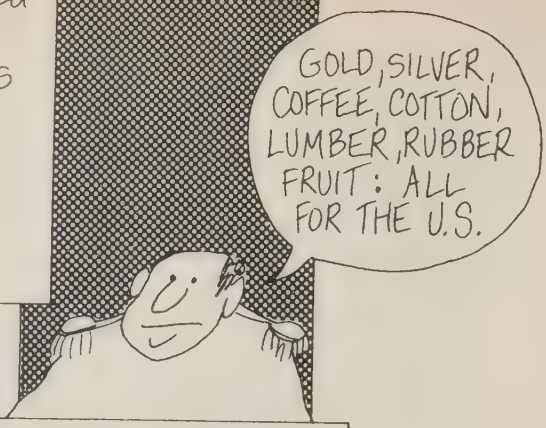
He had no opposition. The National Guard took care of anyone who challenged him.

Even though he was a life-long admirer of Hitler and Mussolini, for business reasons Somoza had to declare "war" against fascism.

And he just happened to end up with the property which was confiscated from Germans during the war. Thus he obtained plantations, sugar mills, and import companies without firing a shot.



With Somoza in power the United States consolidated its control over Nicaragua...



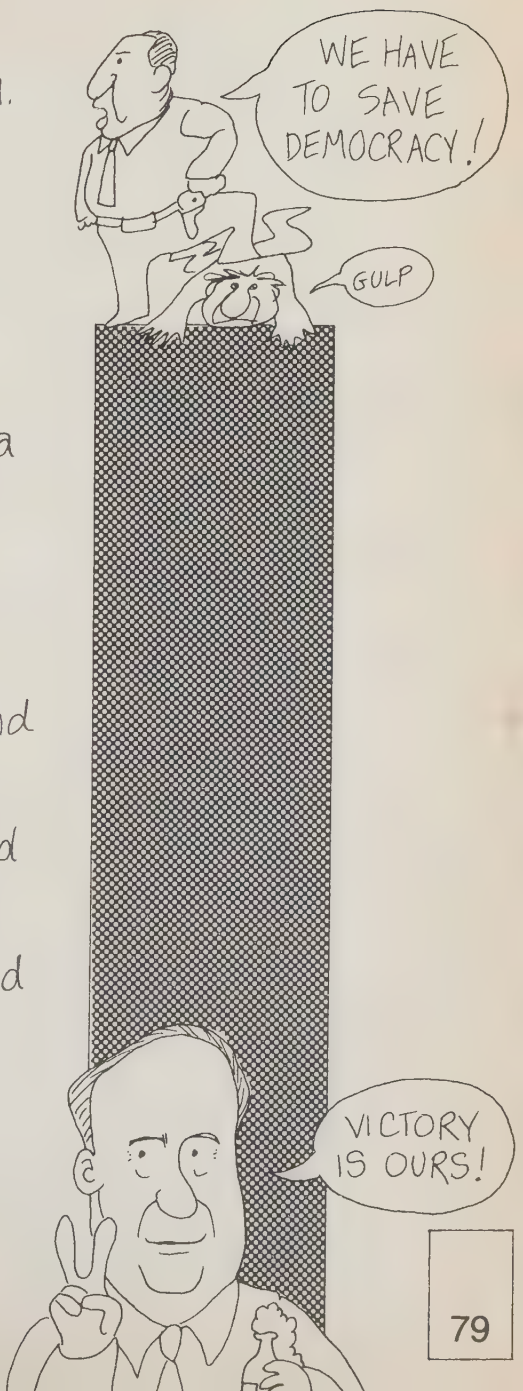
Somoza controlled all exports, making huge profits on what he sold to the U.S.

As a result of supplying the U.S. during World War II Somoza became one of the richest men in Latin America.

He had no opposition. The National Guard took care of anyone who challenged him.

Even though he was a life-long admirer of Hitler and Mussolini, for business reasons Somoza had to declare "war" against fascism.

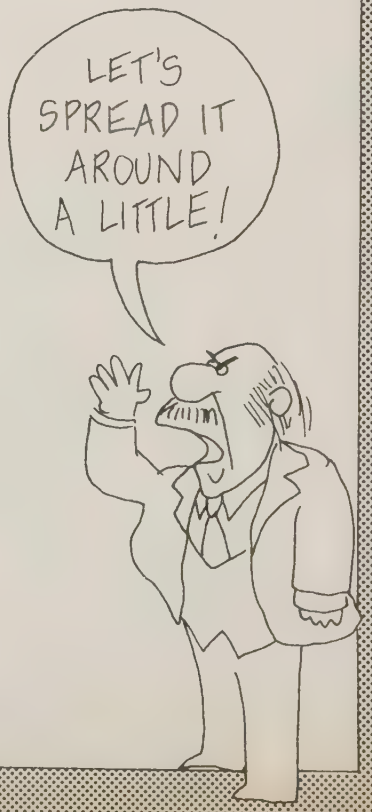
And he just happened to end up with the property which was confiscated from Germans during the war. Thus he obtained plantations, sugar mills, and import companies without firing a shot.



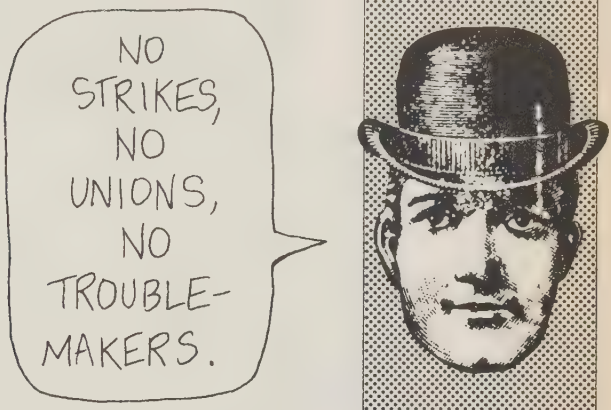
Another of Tacho's scams was gold. Instead of paying taxes, U.S. miners paid Somoza over $400,000 a year.

If cattlemen didn't take their cattle to Somoza's slaughterhouses, the cattle would be confiscated.

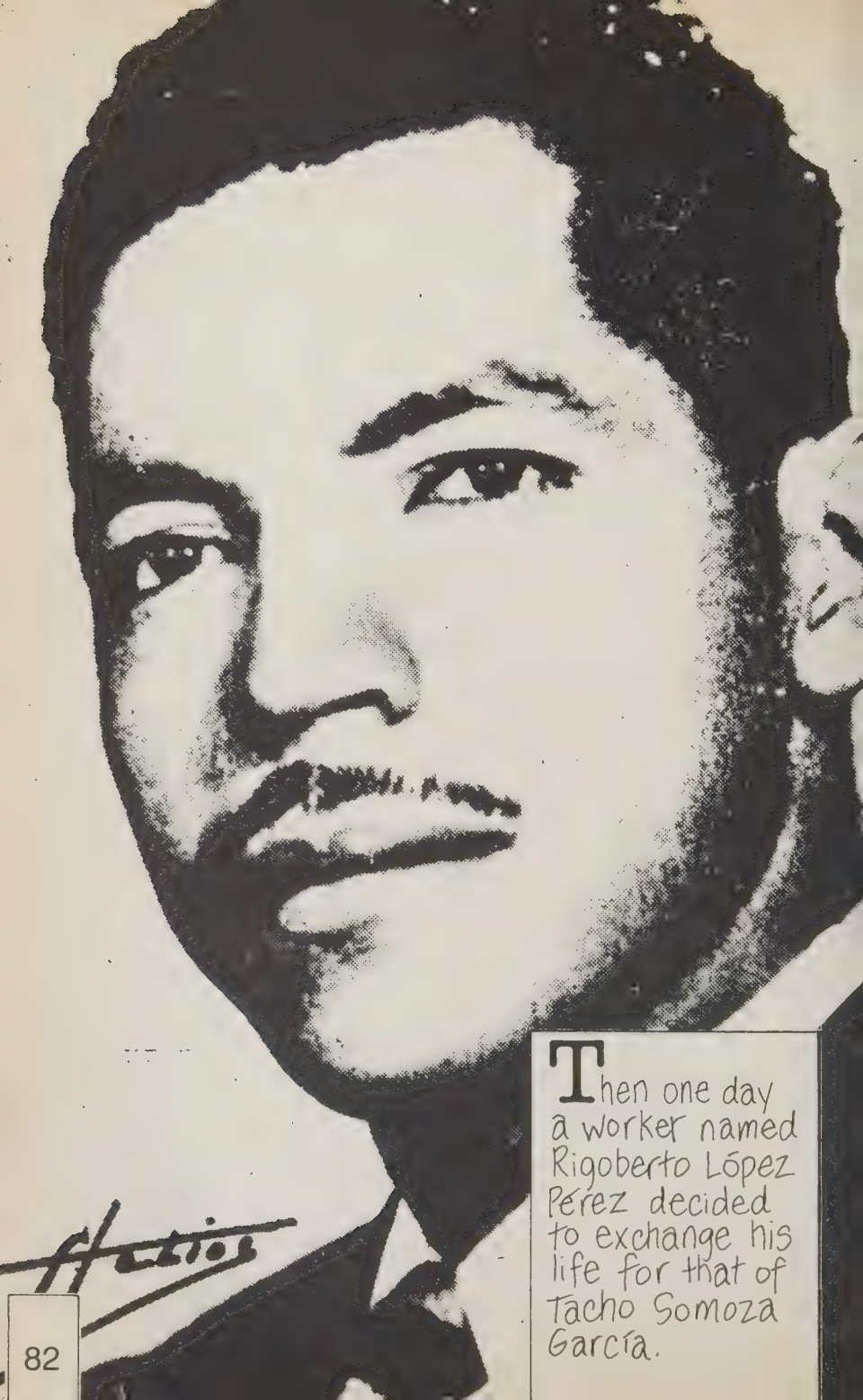
At first he was reluctant to share power with the conservative oligarchy. However, in 1948, and again in 1950 to consolidate his power, Somoza signed the Constitutional Pacts, giving the go-ahead to carve up the economy and set the rules of the game.



Somoza would remain in power with the labor code of 1944, which looked good on paper, but in reality meant:



The National Guard pacification plan, which Somoza directed, killed over 20,000 peasants, workers, and students, something Time-Life books never mentioned.



Then one day a worker named Rigoberto López Pérez decided to exchange his life for that of Tacho Somoza García.

Nicaraguans:

Your duty to your country is surpreme
Finish off Somoza in the only way
which he inexorably imposed on you
And which you know so well.

Otherwise,
You will only languish in ignominy
You will not deserve to be a people
But only a herd of cattle.

RIGOBERTO LÓPEZ PÉREZ

Anxiety:

I suffer for my country
In my veins a hero seeks liberation

The flowers of my time will always be
withered
If the blood of the tyrant is in their veins

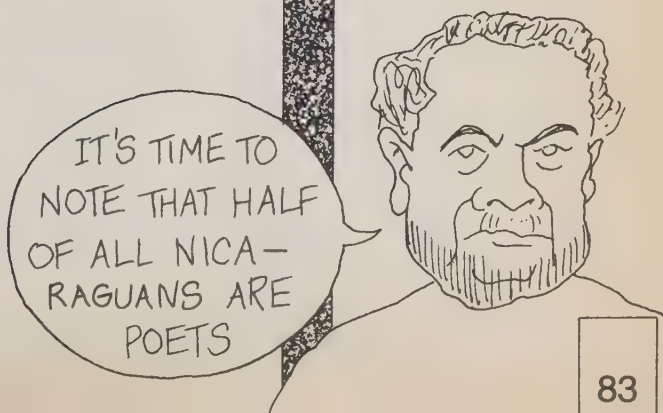
I seek the fruit of liberty
in the death of the tyrant.

RIGOBERTO LÓPEZ PÉREZ

León, Nicaragua 1956

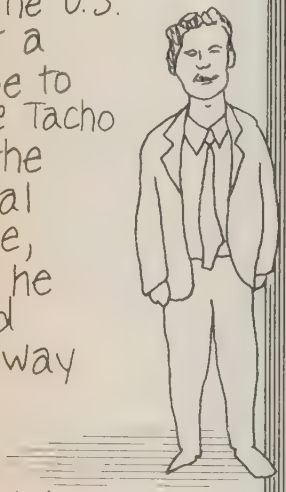
The assassination was planned by four Nicaraguans, two of whom were poets.

They were Rigoberto López Pérez, Edwin Castro, Cornelio Silva, and Ausberto Narvaez.



After dancing a cha cha cha, Rigoberto pumped four bullets into the dictator, who was attending a ball in his honor in León. He was celebrating his umpteenth presidential nomination. It was September 12, 1956.

The U.S. sent a plane to take Tacho to the Canal Zone, but he died anyway



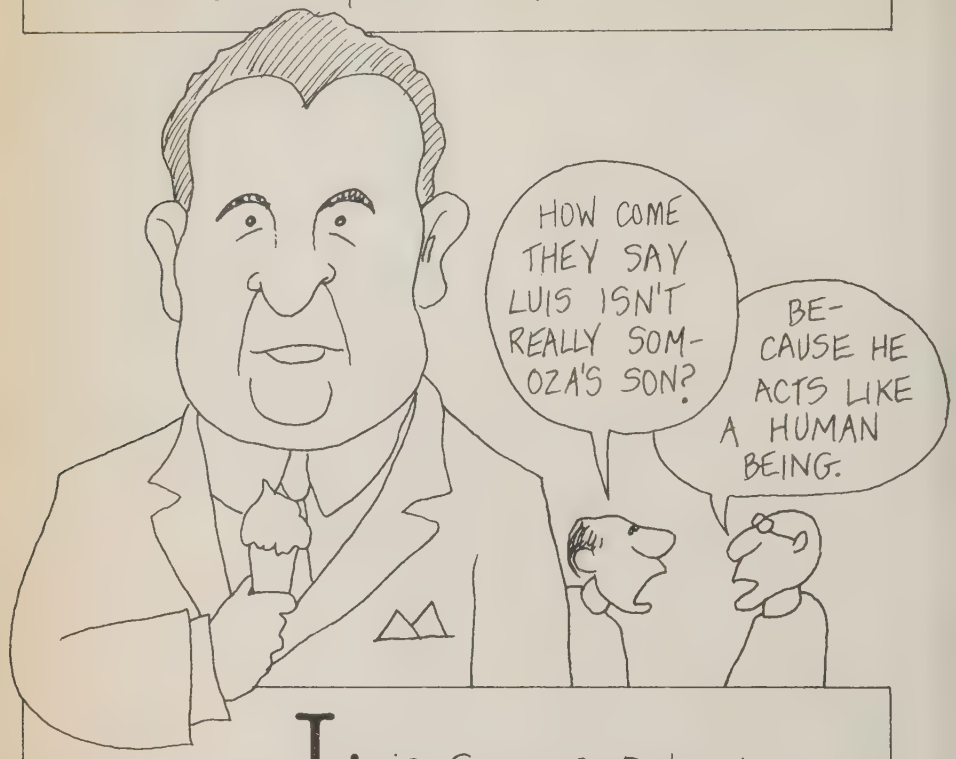
(as did Rigoberto, riddled on the spot with over 60 bullets).

IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE END

However, the death of the tyrant didn't change anything. Even before being shot, Somoza had designated his legitimate sons Luis and Anastasio, Jr., or Tachito, to succeed him. Luis was to be president and Tachito was to be provisional head of the National Guard.

José, an illegitimate son, was a major in the National Guard.

In keeping with Tacho's wishes, Luis became president and Tachito took command of the National Guard.



Luis Somoza Debayle governed with kid gloves for four years. He freed political prisoners, tolerated some freedom of the press, liberalized the economy a little, and announced that presidents could not be re-elected or pass the position on to their children.

While Luis was trying to clean up his image, Tachito insisted that everything be done "Somoza-style."

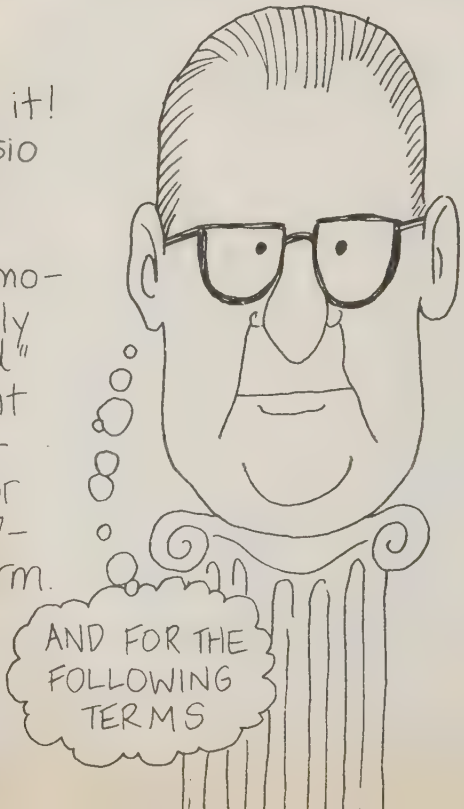
Luis prevailed and imposed René Shick as president. He wasn't even a member of the Somoza tribe . . .

Shick couldn't govern though: Tachito wouldn't let him. So he devoted himself to his favorite pasttime: drinking.

portrait of a dictator
at a young age
Accompanied by his father's sword
and leaning
against the right knee of his whoring mother.

Shick (hic!) died suddenly before his term was over. Tachito designated his good friend Lorenzo Guerrero as interim president.

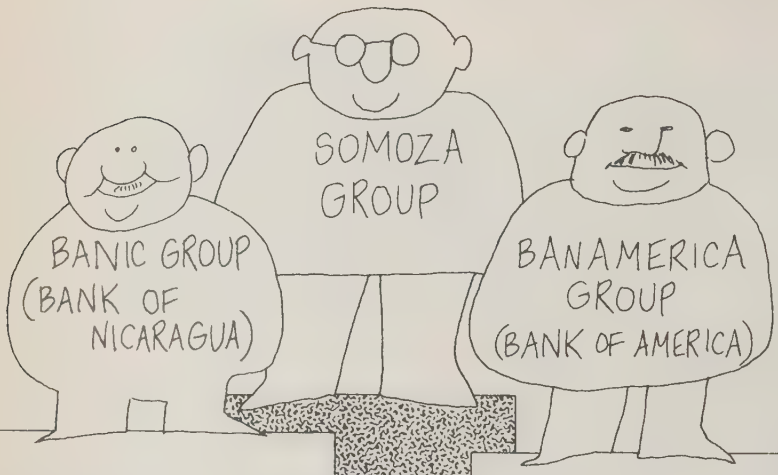
You guessed it! Anastasio Somoza Debayle was democratically "elected" president of Nicaragua for the 1967-1971 term.



His brother Luis, who opposed Tachito's remaining as head of the National Guard, died suddenly in April 1967. Some say his brother poisoned him.

The traditional opposition in Nicaragua, the conservatives, had been bought off or exiled... and the whole country was parceled out...

OWNERS OF NICARAGUA



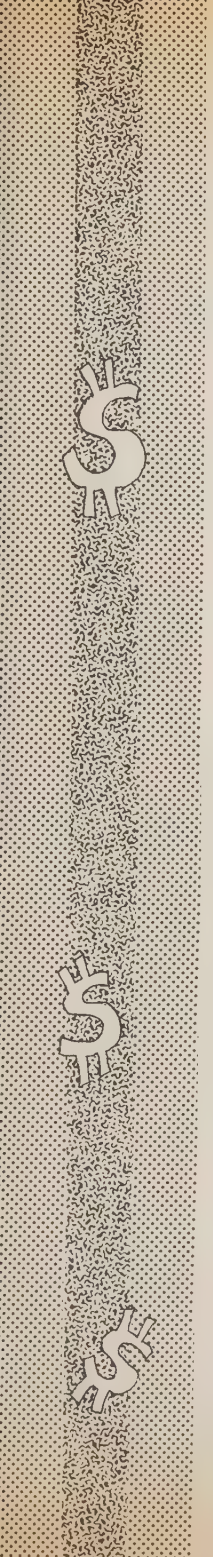
Cotton growing, stores on the Pacific Coast and in Managua (the Guerrero, Montealegré, Reyes, and Montalván families)

The traditional oligarchy, cattle men and merchants, sugar planters and alcohol producers (the Chamorro, Pellas, and Bernad families based in Granada

THE SOMOZA GROUP TAKES SEVERAL PAGES

A ROUGH INVENTORY OF THE SOMOZA FAMILY FORTUNE

ACEITERA CORONA (oils)
AMARNIC (shipping)
Agronica (farm exports)
NIAPSA (Savings and loan bank)
CAPSA (savings and finance)
AISA (construction financing)
INCA (nails and wire)
MONTELIMAR (rum)
AGRICULTURA, Inc. (cotton)
AEROTECNICA, SA. (crop dusting)
CIAS. AGROPECUARIAS, SA (cotton)
INMUEBLES, SA (housing and real estate)
ALMANICA (warehouses)
ALUMEX (aluminium)
MORRILLO Y ANEXOS (rice)
ALTAMIRA, SA (rice)
SAN JUAN, SA (rice)
NICALIT (asbestos cement)
CONDOR SA (buses)
DISMOTOR
A. SOMOZA & CIA
COMDECOSA
AUTOS DEL PACIFICO
— Cars & Trucks
LANICA (airline)
10 Sugar mills
CASTLE COOK (bananas)
BANK OF CENTRAL AMERICA
PACSA (fishing boats)
CELTA, SA (lumber)
AGROINCA
GRANO DE ORO
— Coffee
COMPRABESNIC (shipping)
MAYCO IND., SA (lime)
DORESTA (furniture)
CARNIC (meat packing)
MATADERO IGOSA (slaughterhouse)
MATADERO CONDECA
IFGAN (cattle)
CENTRAL MEAT PACKERS
CELULOSA SUBNARA (cellulose)
EINSA (bottles)
PAPELES Y CARTONES, SA (Paper)
CONAPROCE (cement)
FOSFORERA MOMO TOMBO (matches)



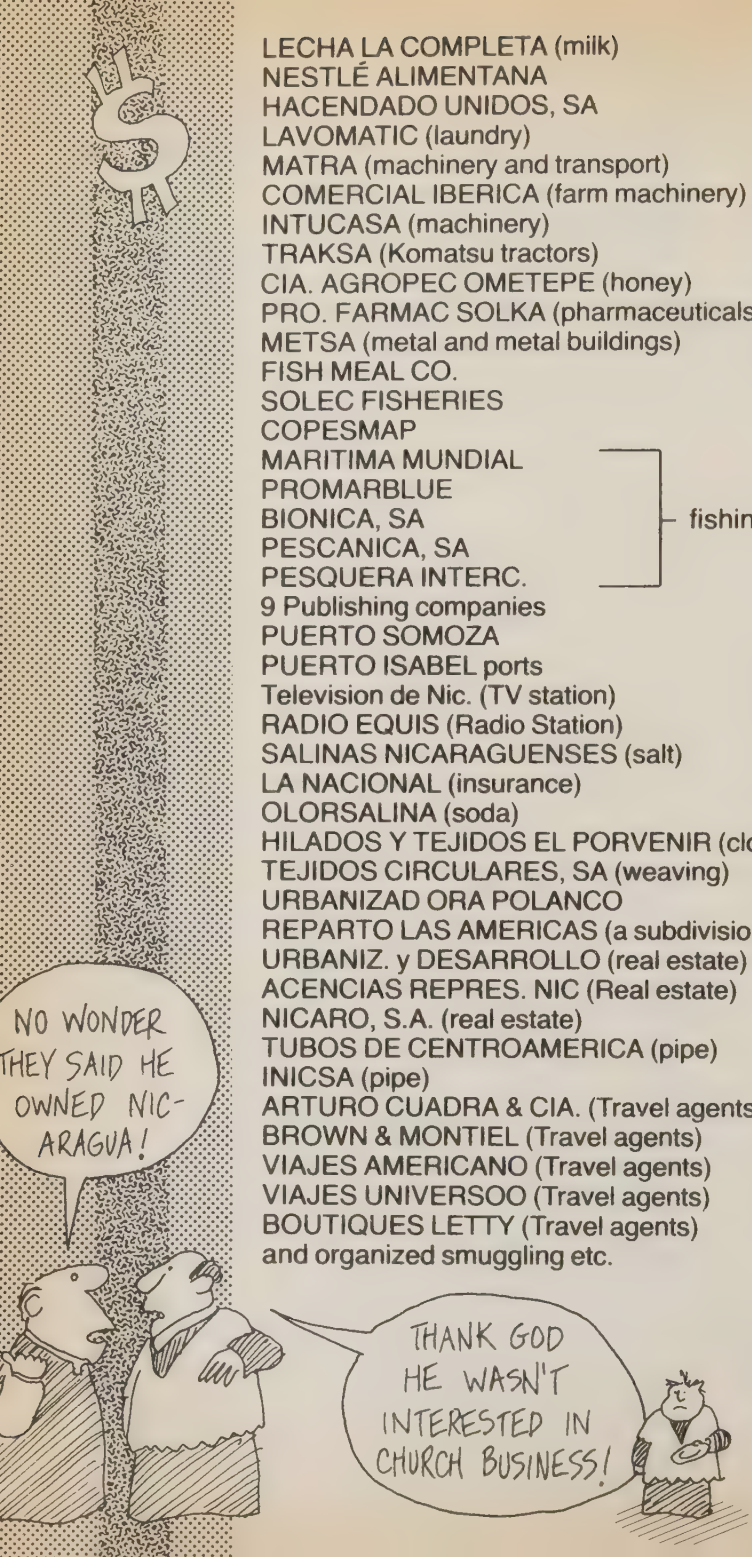
AISLITE (insulation)
ESINCA (roofs)
TANIC
NICARAGUA CIGARS
HACIENDA LA MIA
IND. TABACALERA DEL NORTE
HOYOS DE NICARAGUA
VEGAS DE JALAPA
CENTROAM. DE TOBACO
ANITA, SA
— tobacco

PORQUERIZA DEL REGALO (Hams)
TEATROS AGUERRI (cinemas)
OPERADORA DE CINES (cinemas)
DORMICENTRO
F.A. MENDIETA
TELEVISION DE NICARAGUA
TIENDAS ALICIA
— stores

CONCRETO PREMEZCLADO (concrete)
PRODUCTOS DE CONCRETO: SA (concrete)
MAYCO INDUSTRIAL (quarries)
Machinery and Construction
PROCISA (data processing)
INTUCSA
CASANICA
PANELFAB
— construction

LA CHONTAL (leather)
SONIDO INDUSTRIAL (records, phonographs)
PUERTO LIBRE SA (Duty free shop)
ENERGETICOS SA (energy)
ESINCA (chemicals)
MAMENIC LINE (shipping)
MARTIMA MUNCIAL FERRY, SA
SOSACLORA DE NICARAGUA (chlorine)
REVISTA VISION (a magazine)
INQUISA (fertilizers)
HERCULES DE C.A. (fertilizers)
ELECROQUIMCA PENNSALT (chemicals)
ABONOS SUPERIORES, SA (fertilizers)
63 Cattle ranches
HIELO POLAR (ice)
CIA. LA HIELERA (ice)
HOTELES DE NICARAGUA, SA
HOTEL EL RECREO
HOTELERA IRAZU (in Costa Rica)
GRAN HOTEL (San Salvador)
HOTEL VILLAMAONA (Madrid)
EDITORIAL NOVEDADES (a newspaper)
JOYERIA DREHER (jewelry)
PROLACASA (milk)
CIA, PRODUCT ORA DE LECHE (milk)

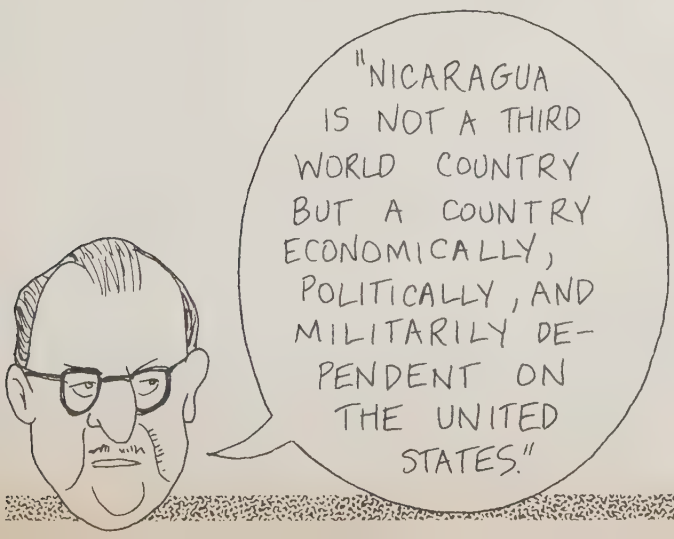
LECHA LA COMPLETA (milk)
NESTLÉ ALIMENTANA
HACENDADO UNIDOS, SA
LAVOMATIC (laundry)
MATRA (machinery and transport)
COMERCIAL IBERICA (farm machinery)
INTUCASA (machinery)
TRAKSA (Komatsu tractors)
CIA. AGROPEC OMETEPE (honey)
PRO. FARMAC SOLKA (pharmaceuticals)
METSA (metal and metal buildings)
FISH MEAL CO.
SOLEC FISHERIES
COPESMAP
MARITIMA MUNDIAL
PROMARBLUE
BIONICA, SA
PESCANICA, SA
PESQUERA INTERC.
} fishing
9 Publishing companies
PUERTO SOMOZA
PUERTO ISABEL ports
Television de Nic. (TV station)
RADIO EQUIS (Radio Station)
SALINAS NICARAGUENSES (salt)
LA NACIONAL (insurance)
OLORSALINA (soda)
HILADOS Y TEJIDOS EL PORVENIR (cloth)
TEJIDOS CIRCULARES, SA (weaving)
URBANIZAD ORA POLANCO
REPARTO LAS AMERICAS (a subdivision)
URBANIZ. y DESARROLLO (real estate)
ACENCIAS REPRES. NIC (Real estate)
NICARO, S.A. (real estate)
TUBOS DE CENTROAMERICA (pipe)
INICSA (pipe)
ARTURO CUADRA & CIA. (Travel agents)
BROWN & MONTIEL (Travel agents)
VIAJES AMERICANO (Travel agents)
VIAJES UNIVERSOO (Travel agents)
BOUTIQUES LETTY (Travel agents)
and organized smuggling etc.



Transnational interests in Nicaragua (mostly American) included the following companies:

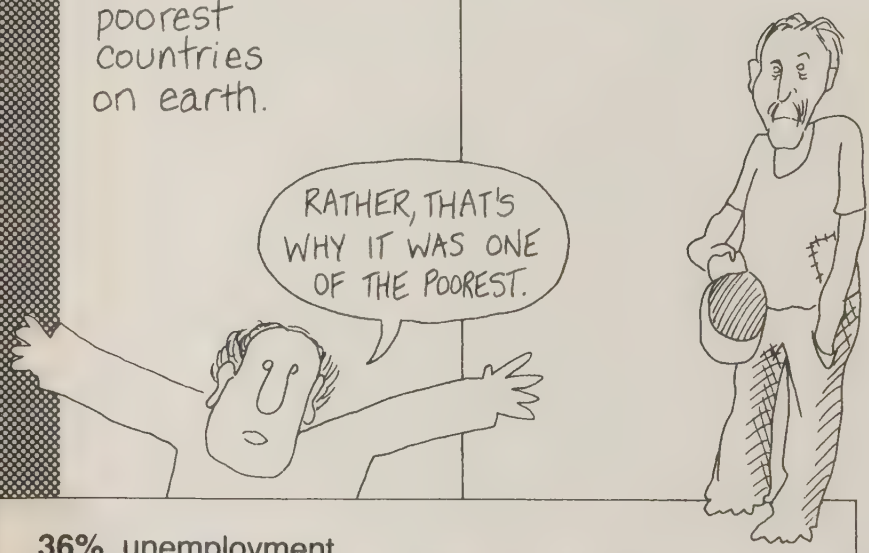
BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO • GENERAL MILLS
NABISCO INC • EXXON • NESTLÉ ALIMENTANA
RALSTON PURINA • SEARS • UNITED FRUIT CO.
QUAKER OATS • ASARCO • WARD FOODS • EVANS PRODUCTS
DRESDNER BANK • BANK OF AMERICA • SINGER
FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK • LLOYD'S BANK
ST. REGIS PAPER • AMERICAN CYANAMID • SHELL
WESTERN INT. HOTELS • ABBOT LABORATORIES
COLGATE-PALMOLIVE • HOFFMAN LA ROCHE • XEROX
ATLAS CHEMICAL INC. • BORDEN INC • U.S. STEEL
H.B. FULLER CO. • RCA VICTOR • MITSUI SHINETSU
MOHAWK • OLIN CORPORATION • G.T. & E. • MONSANTO
ADELA INVESTMENT • PENNWALT • SHERATON HOTELS
UNITED BRANDS • WINTHROP PLYWOOD • HUGHES TOOLS
WESTINGHOUSE • ETCETERA

Somoza, Jr., was certainly correct in 1974 when he told the Mexican paper Excelsior:


"NICARAGUA IS NOT A THIRD WORLD COUNTRY BUT A COUNTRY ECONOMICALLY, POLITICALLY, AND MILITARILY DEPENDENT ON THE UNITED STATES."

The Somoza family wealth was estimated at $900 million, quite a lot when you consider how poor Nicaragua was.

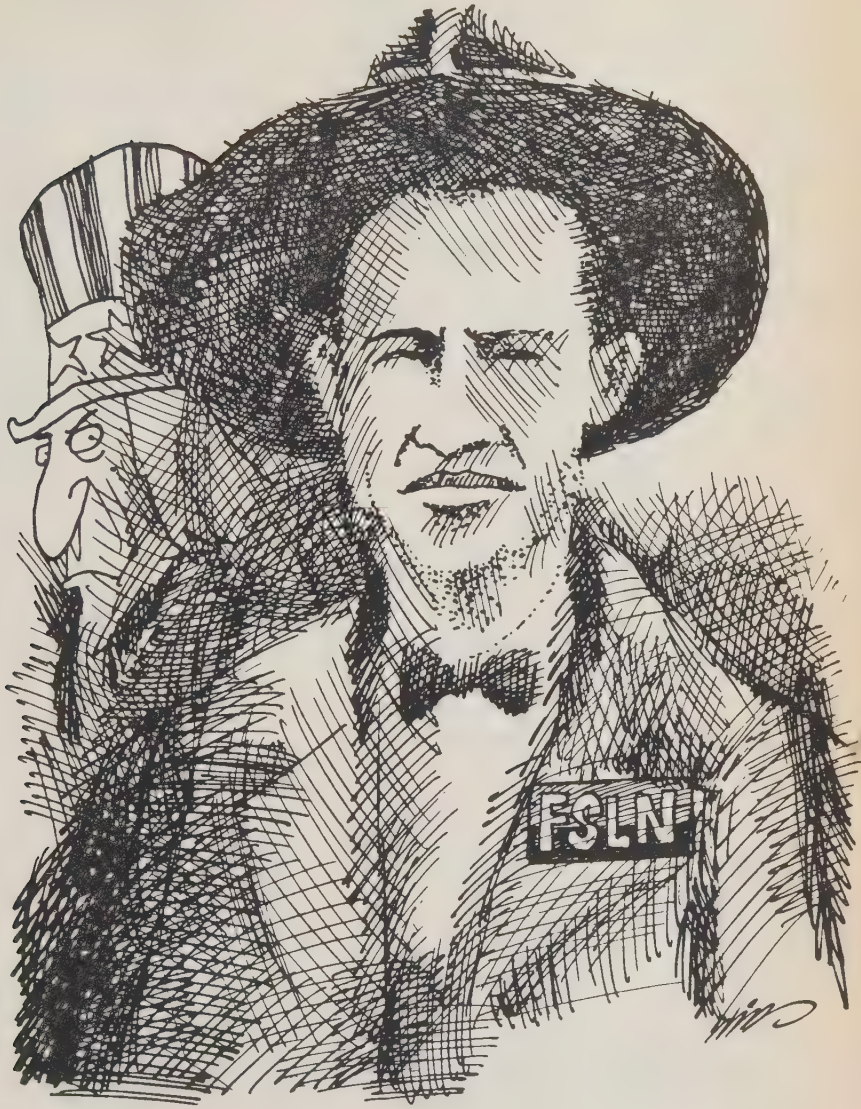
Despite Somoza's enormous wealth and foreign investment, Nicaragua was one of the poorest countries on earth.



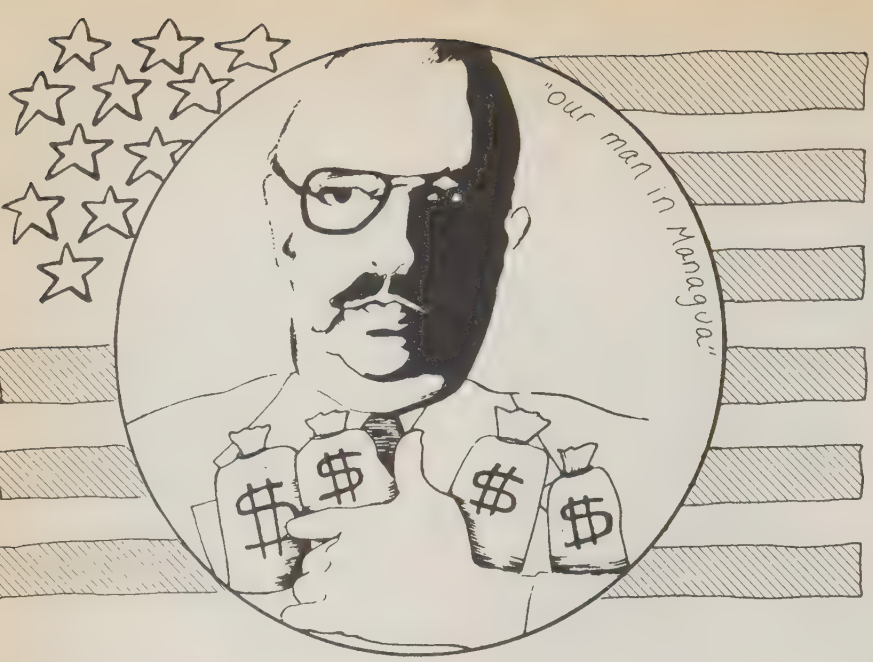
36% unemployment
74% illiteracy
20% children die before age four

73% substandard housing
60% malnutrition
80% kids without school

Chapter 4:



The Children of Sandino

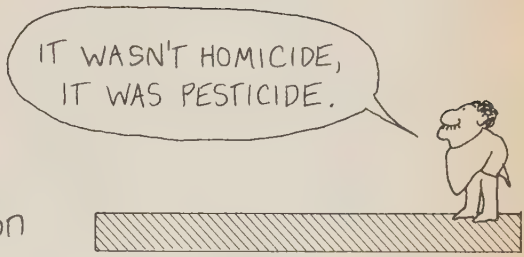


The American empire, whose marines left in 1933, returned disguised as businessmen, and cut a deal with the Somoza family . . .

WAS SANDINO'S STRUGGLE IN VAIN?

The struggle against the Somozas began with Rigoberto López Pérez's killing of the old tyrant.

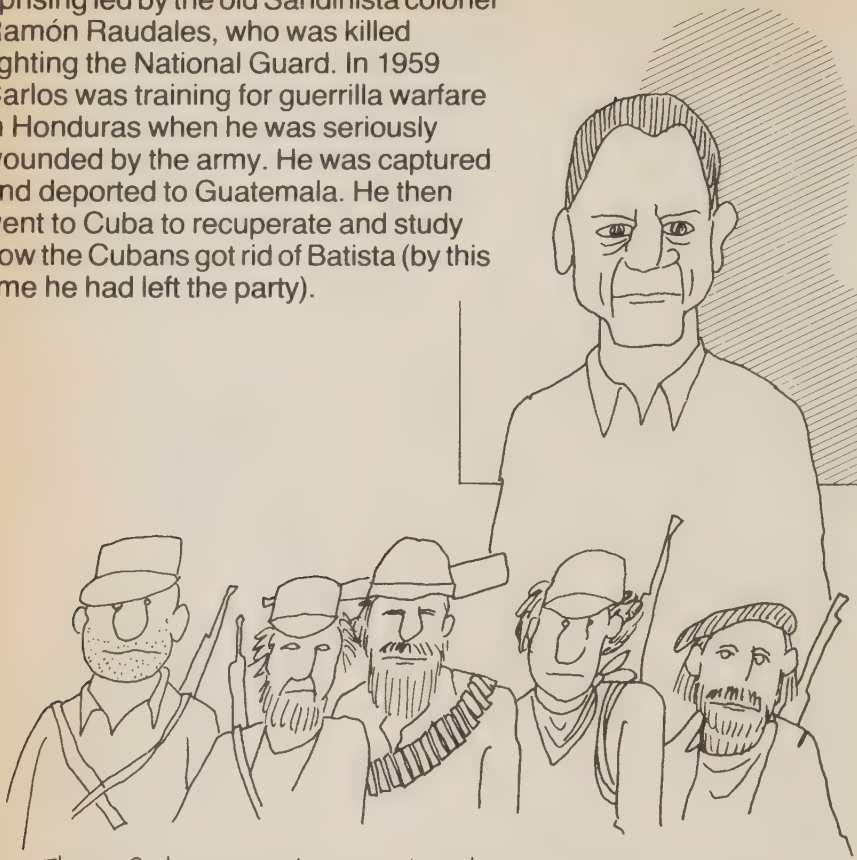
Popular rejoicing was dampened by the fierce repression which Somoza's sons unleashed in search of "accomplices" to the killing. Hundreds of students were imprisoned, including Carlos Fonseca and Tomás Borge.



He was born in Matagalpa in 1935—the son of a humble cook. As best he could, he attended primary and secondary school and then in 1954 enrolled in Law School in Managua.

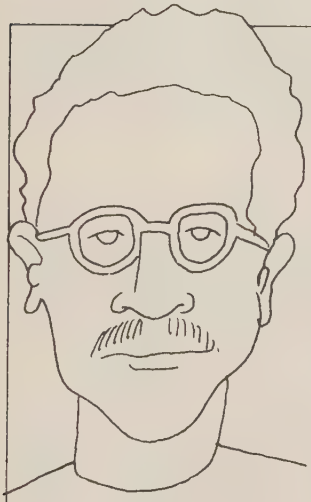
In 1955 he joined the Nicaraguan Socialist Party (which was really the Nicaraguan Communist Party) and soon became a student leader, traveling to the 1957 World Youth Festival in Moscow.

In 1958 Carlos participated in an uprising led by the old Sandinista colonel Ramón Raudales, who was killed fighting the National Guard. In 1959 Carlos was training for guerrilla warfare in Honduras when he was seriously wounded by the army. He was captured and deported to Guatemala. He then went to Cuba to recuperate and study how the Cubans got rid of Batista (by this time he had left the party).



The Cuban victory thrilled young Nicaraguans, who decided to repeat the Cuban experience. Between 1958 and 1960 there were over 60 armed uprisings, all of them smashed by the Guard.

Given their lack of arms, training and organization, the guerrilla groups of the time were easy prey for the Guard, armed and trained by the U.S.



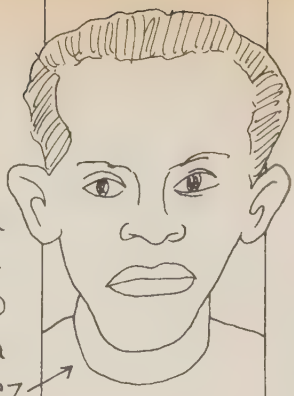
Fonseca returned to Nicaragua in 1960 and was jailed. Once he was freed, he began to organize the survivors into one group.

Thus all the nationalists formed one group, the Sandinista movement, later called the National Liberation Front. Finally (in 1963) it adopted the name of FSLN*

*in Spanish the initials stand for Sandinista National Liberation Front.

There were ten founders of the FSLN:

Carlos Fonseca
Santos López
Jorge Navarro
Silvio Mayorga
Germán Pomarez
Faustino Ruiz
Tomás Borge
Rigoberto Cruz
Fco. Buitrago &
José Benito Escobar



They adopted Sandino's old black and red flag, as well as the living ideology of the hero of the Segovias.

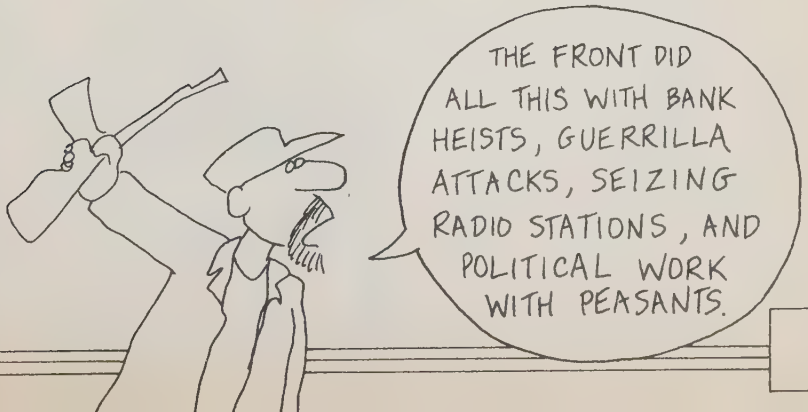
FSLN

It was quite a challenge: The Guard was strong and the people were de-politicized. In addition, Somoza had the economic, political, and military support of the United States.

The struggle was incredibly hard and long: 18 years! It's almost impossible to summarize this veritable epic of a people willing to die to be free.

1963-1970:

Until 1970 the Front was isolated from the masses. It devoted itself to clandestine organizing, surviving the brutal repression, and gaining enough moral authority to mobilize the people against Somoza.



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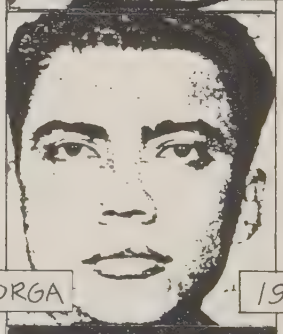
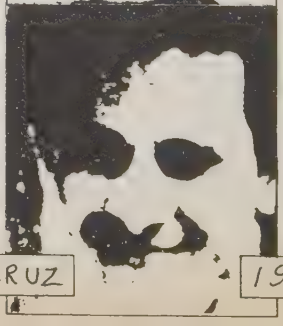
JORGE NAVARRO 1963

FRANCISCO BUITRAGO 1963

FAUSTINO RUIZ 1963



SILVIO MAYORGA 1967

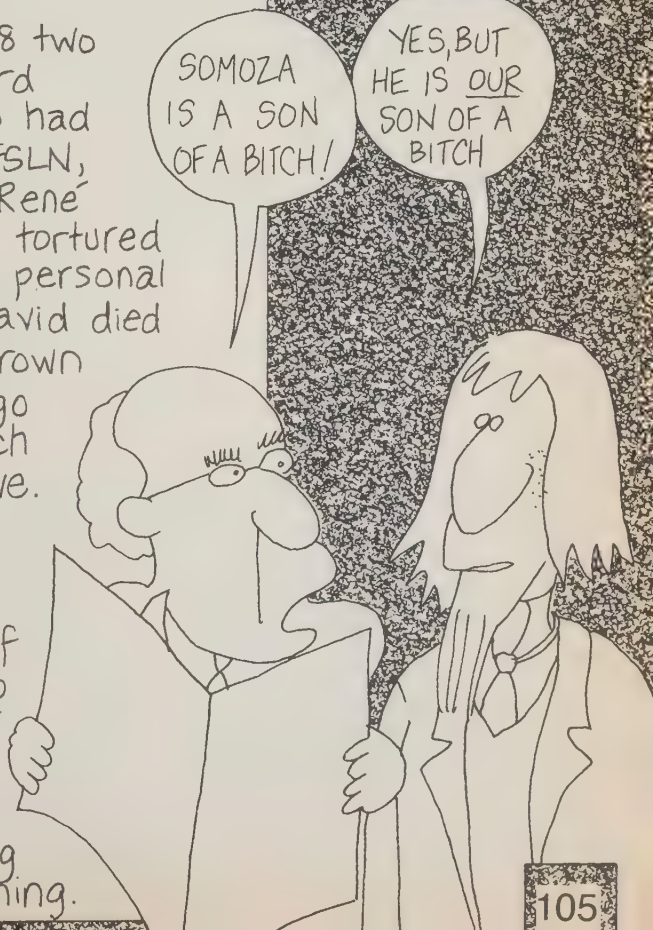


RIGOBERTO CRUZ 1967

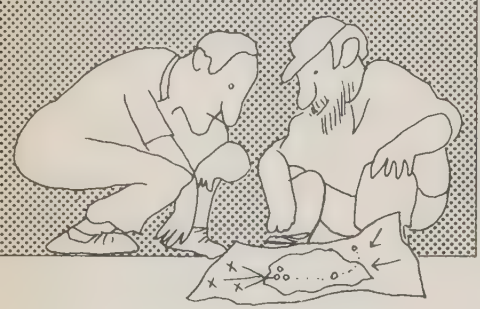
They weren't the only ones to die. On different occasions the following were killed:

RENÉ CARRIÓN
HUGO MEDINA
FERNANDO GORDILLO
LUCIANO VILCHEZ
EDMUNDO PÉREZ
CASIMIRO SOTELO
ROBERTO AMAYA
AND
SELÍM SHIBLE

In April 1968 two former Guard officers who had joined the FSLN, David and René Tejada, were tortured by Somoza's personal assistant. David died and was thrown into Santiago volcano, which is still active. The whole world was horrified by the cruelty of Somoza, who merrily went about his business as if nothing was happening.



The
1970 -1974
period was a difficult time, during which the Sandinistas built up their strength.



They had to develop their human and material base, set up clandestine schools for combatants, and gather arms and money for the final struggle against Somoza. They survived attempts by the Guard to encircle them in the mountains and organized people in the cities as well. Somoza thought he had finished the FSLN off, but it was alive and well.

In December 1972 an earthquake destroyed Managua, causing up to 20,000 deaths!

MY IMAGE SUFFERED A LITTLE...*

The main beneficiaries were Somoza, who stole foreign assistance funds sent for quake victims, and the Guard, which looted the rubble that had been Managua.

* Especially due to what happened later...

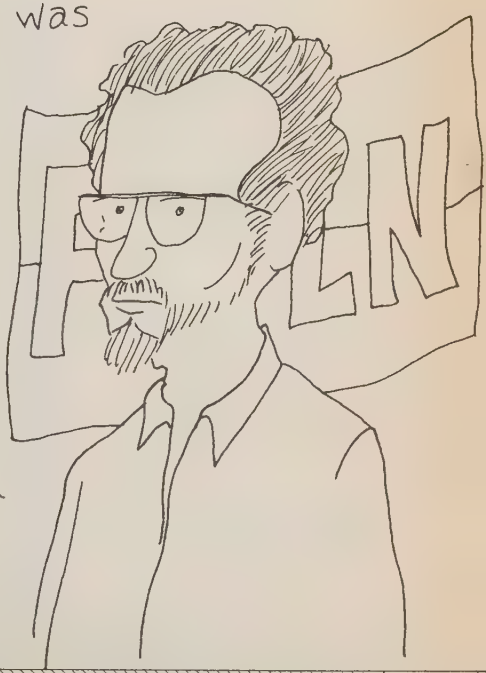
Two guerrilla actions were sufficient to (a) make Somoza look ridiculous, and (b) show the world the strength and seriousness of the Sandinistas.

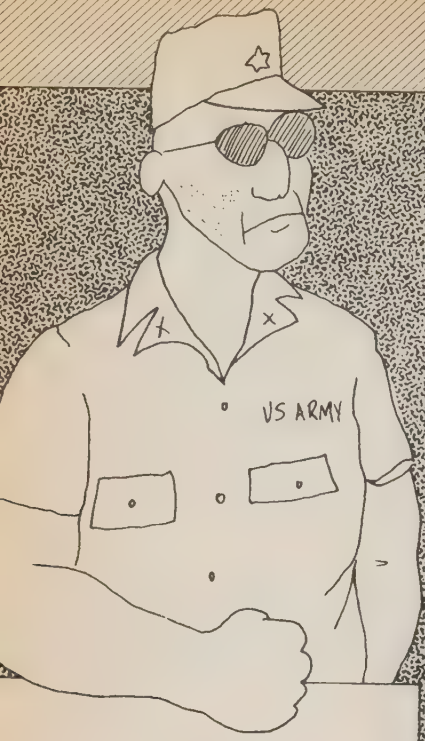
The first was the take-over of Chema Castillo's house.

On December 27, 1974 a Sandinista commando group burst into a fancy party in honor of the U.S. ambassador, taking various ambassadors and high officials as hostages. They demanded freedom for political prisoners, $5 million ransom, wage increases for workers, and the publication of statements in newspapers and on the radio. Somoza had to agree to almost everything (although he bargained them down to $2 million ransom).

Nevertheless, 1976 was a difficult year for the Front. Tomás Borge was arrested and tortured, as were 13 other Sandinistas.

And worse, on the 8th of November the founder of the FSLN, Carlos Fonseca Amador, was killed in Zinica.





Somoza asked Uncle Sam for help and soon yankee advisors arrived.

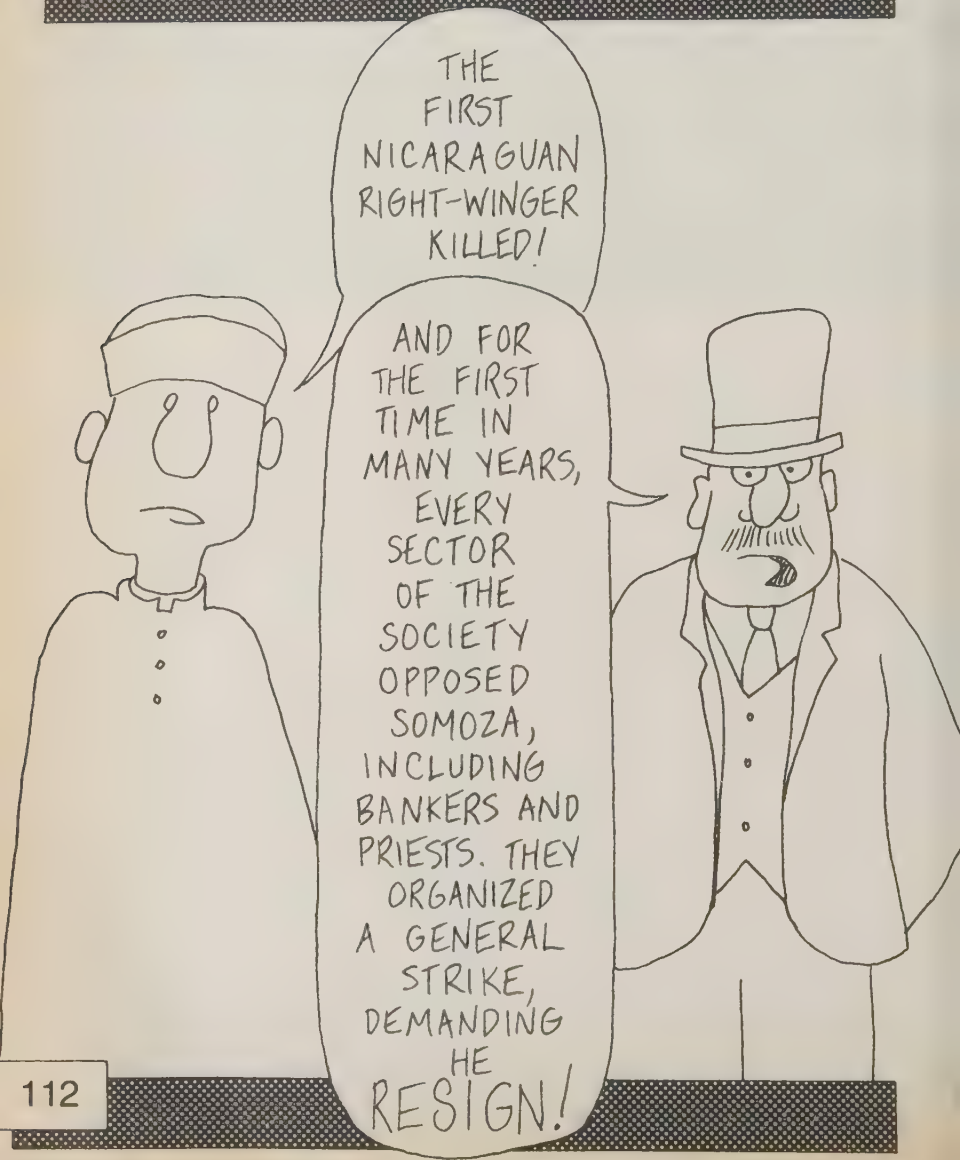
In 1976 and 1977 many "compas" were killed:

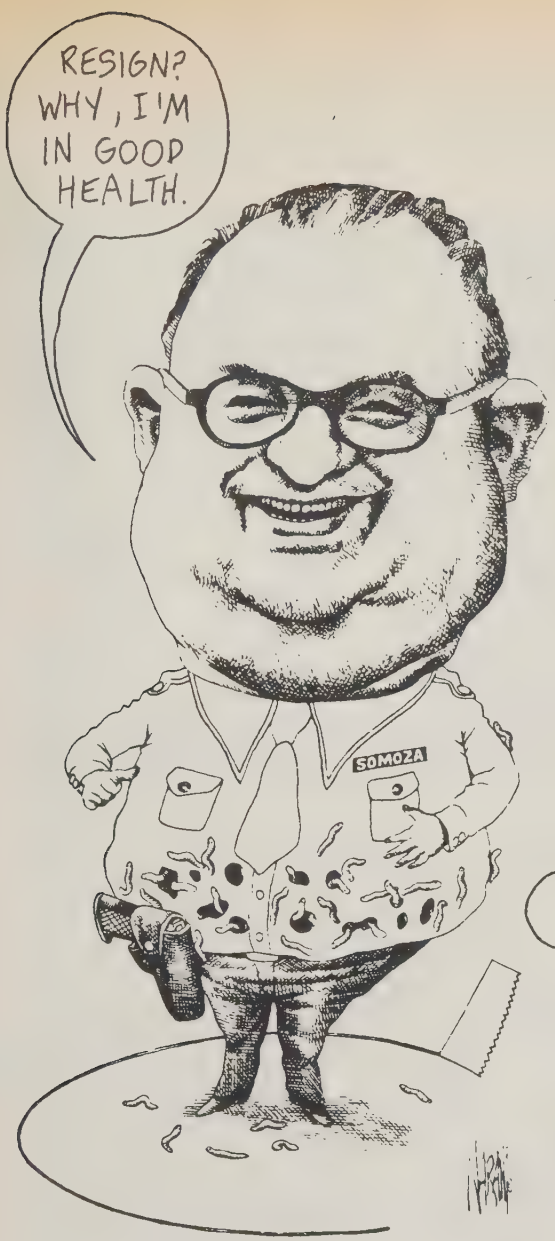
IRWING R. URCUYO
FABIO MARTÍNEZ
J. ANTONIO RÍOS
EDGAR MUNGUÍA
ROBERTO HUEMBES
EDUARDO CONTRERAS
SILVIO REÑASCO
ROGELIÓ PICADO
RUFO MARÍN
CLAUDIA CHAMORRO
WALTER PENTZKE
CARLOS AGUERO
LUZ MARINA SILVA
MARÍA M. AVENDAÑO
ANGELITA MORALES
FELIX PEDRO PICADO

ARLENE SIU
RENÉ TEJADA
HUGO ARÉVALO
MARIO ESTRADA
GILBERTO ROSTRÁN
JULIA H. DE POMARES
MERCEDES REYES
JUAN ESPINOZA
LEÓNIDAS ESPINOZA
JACINTO HERNÁNDEZ
FIDEL AGUILAR
BONIFACIO MONTOYA
TINO MALDONADO
FILEMÓN RIVERA

AUGUSTO SALINAS
JORGE SINFOROSO B.
J. DE DIOS MUÑOZ
RAÚL GONZÁLEZ
ISRAEL LEWITES
ERNESTO MEDRANO
ROBERTO PICHARDO
ELVIS CHAVARRÍA
DONALD GUEVARA
MAX SOMARRIBA
PEDRO ARAUZ
CARLOS ARROYO
GENOVEVA RODRÍGUEZ

With the assassination (ordered by Tacho's son and heir designate: Antonio Somoza, Jr.) of Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, editor of the conservative, anti-Somoza La Prensa, the FSLN's situation improved in 1978.


THE FIRST NICARAGUAN RIGHT-WINGER KILLED!
AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS, EVERY SECTOR OF THE SOCIETY OPPOSED SOMOZA, INCLUDING BANKERS AND PRIESTS. THEY ORGANIZED A GENERAL STRIKE, DEMANDING HE RESIGN!



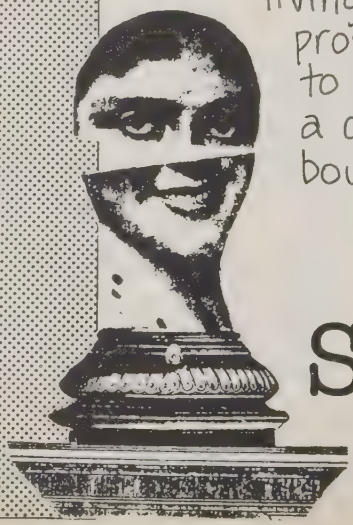
"Los Doce", a group of twelve anti-Somocistas, soon formed. It included priests, intellectuals, and businessmen who demanded the dictator's resignation.

Students throughout the country went on strike, even at Catholic schools.

The right wing formed an opposition party, the Nicaraguan Democratic Movement, led by a businessman named Robelo!

Somoza was shaken.
By this time nobody wanted him, not even the U.S.

His American wife even left him, since the dictator was living with a prostitute, Dinorah, to whom he gave a chain of fancy boutiques.



Something was rotten in the state of Nicaragua.

On August 22,1978, a Sandinista commando unit, with a woman as one of its leaders, took the National Palace when congress was in session, thus forcing Somoza to free Tomás Borge and other political prisoners, pay a half million dollars ransom, and publish Sandinista manifestos.

Somoza was humiliated; even his own newspaper published the Sandinista communiqué.

This set off a popular insurrection, signaling the end of Somoza.

The Nicaraguan people rose up en masse against the Guard in Matagalpa, Chinandega, León, Masaya and Managua.

Everybody was involved: Indians from Monimbó, guerrillas in the mountains, peasants in Jinotega, and old Sandinistas in Wiwilí.

WITH A SINGLE VOICE:

PATRIA LIBRE O MORIR!

Once again more than a hundred Nicaraguans who loved their country as much as Sandino came forward.

Amazingly enough, the U.S. proposal to send an inter-American "peace" force was defeated. (Mexico, Panama, Costa Rica and Venezuela helped the FSLN.

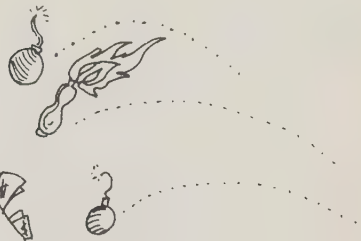
They even accused him of genocide.

And genocide it was!

When Somoza saw he was losing, he ordered the indiscriminate bombing of towns, cities, factories, churches and hospitals. He took all the money he could find (his and the treasury's).

With the defeat of Somoza and the National Guard, de facto killing of kids over the age of 13 took place in the streets, regardless of whether or not they were Sandinistas.

By then nothing could prevent the defeat of the Guard and the U.S. mercenaries. Somoza could only have stayed in power by killing every Nicaraguan.



On July 17, 1979, Somoza grabbed his wallet and fled to Miami...

He left in his place a poor sucker named Urcuyo who lasted for 43 hours as president, hiding under his bed...

Since the Sandinistas were then arriving in Managua!

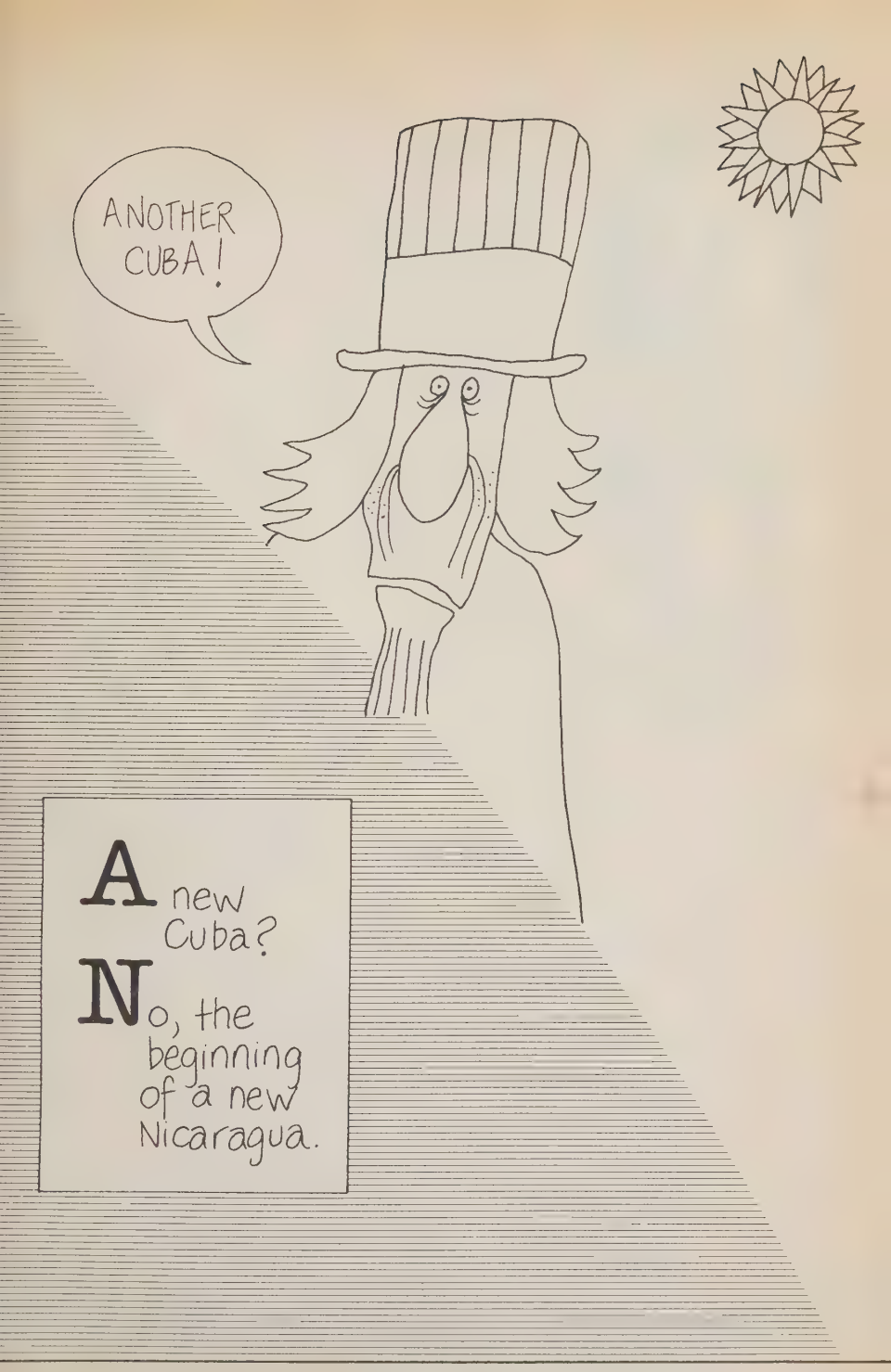
The victory took a heavy toll. The UN reported:

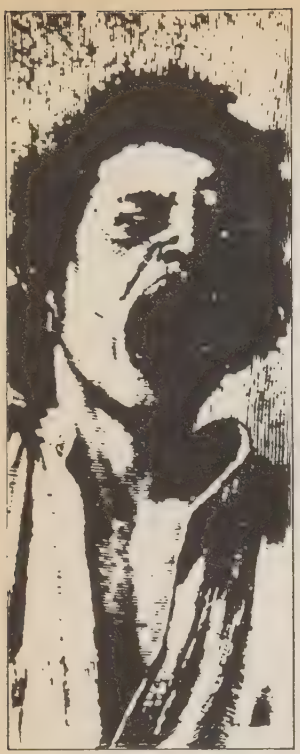
40,000 dead
200,000 families homeless
40,000 orphans
750,000 without food
1 million refugees

A foreign debt of
$1.6 billion
A third of all
industry destroyed.

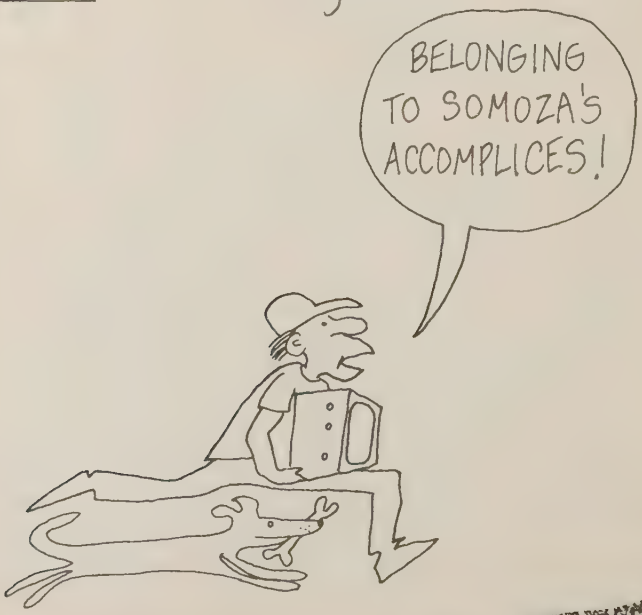
Somoza left a destroyed, indebted country...

Despite this the people were happy! They had finally liberated themselves, not only from Somoza, but from the colonizer from the North!


ANOTHER CUBA!
A new Cuba?
No, the beginning of a new Nicaragua.

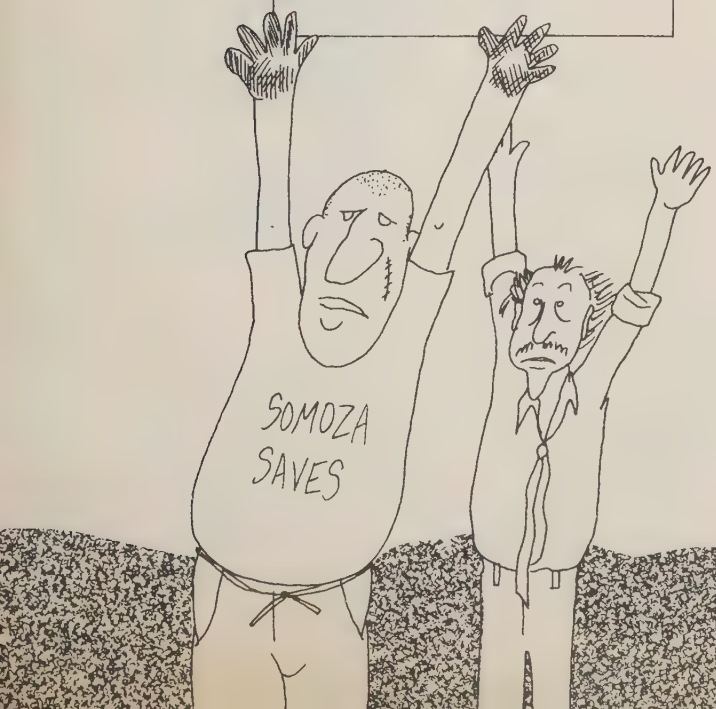


The Sandinista victory and the flight of the Guard brought forth a popular outburst, especially among the poor, who looted stores in Managua...



Another act of "justice" was the killing without trial or other formalities of killer cops, informants, torturers and military.

(Only a few were killed: the 300 who didn't manage to escape.)



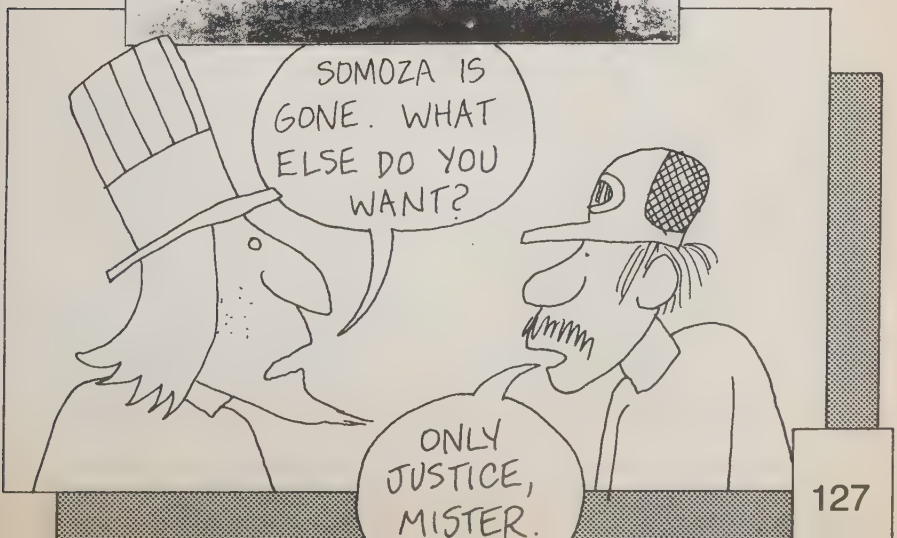
The Sandinistas could do little to stop this explosion of popular wrath by those seeking vengeance for 40 years of abuse and exploitation.

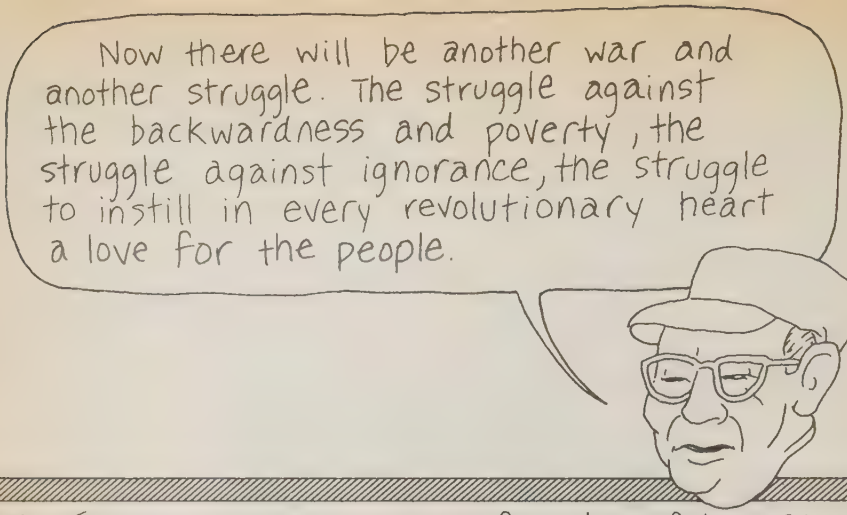
NOW THAT THERE IS NO GOVERNMENT!

Such a response was inevitable in a country which had suffered 40 years of injustice, terror, corruption and oppression.

The people, by destroying everything relating to Somocismo, wanted to start anew: begin a new life, blotting out the old, eliminating everything which hadn't been destroyed by the war and the earthquake.

Once the nightmare of Somocismo was over, the reconstruction had to begin; that is, a revolution.

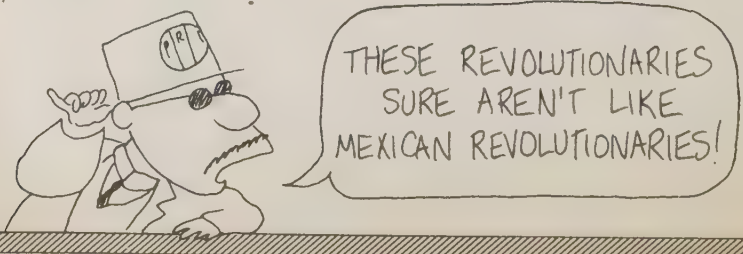


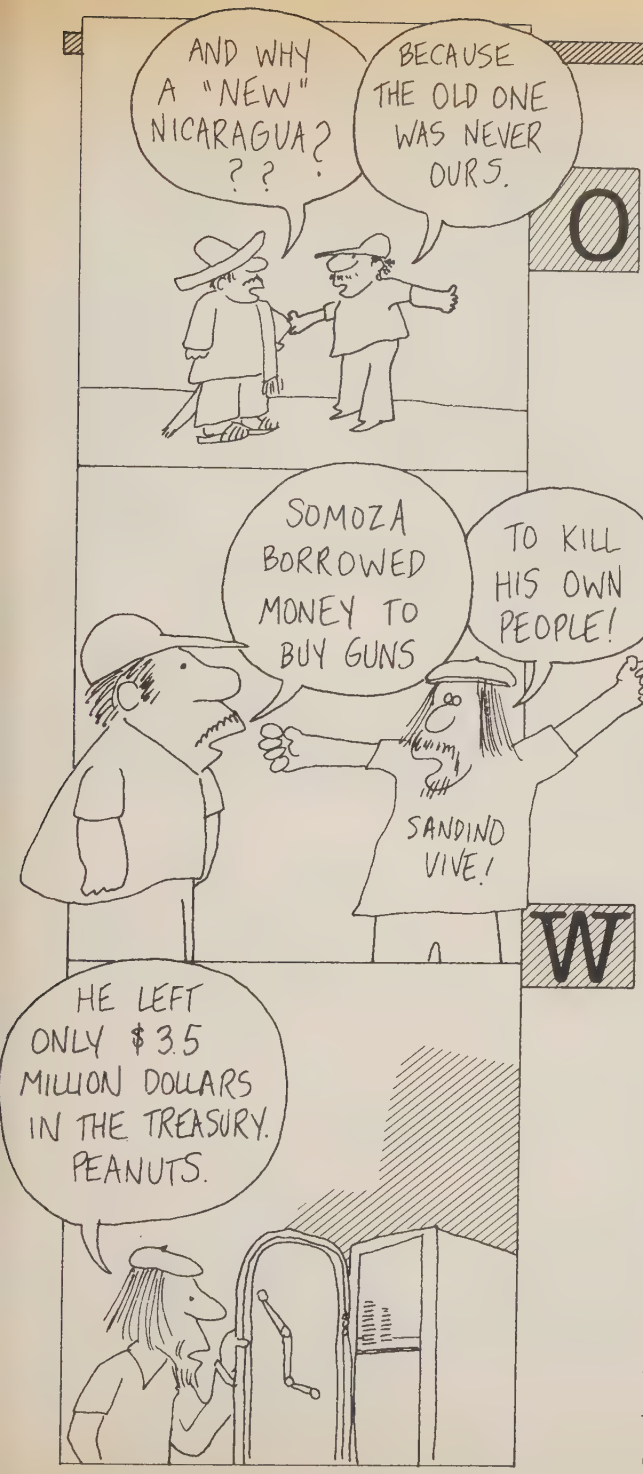

Now there will be another war and another struggle. The struggle against the backwardness and poverty, the struggle against ignorance, the struggle to instill in every revolutionary heart a love for the people.

Tomás Borge, only surviving founder of the FSLN.

"This revolution is irreversible, and not only that, this revolution will be carried to its ultimate consequences. Not surprisingly, there are some people who don't like that, who ask us where we are going. They say it's dangerous, that this revolution is communist. We say no, this revolution is not communist, it is a Sandinista revolution.

"But we could say this revolution is communist and not take revolutionary measures, and the enemies of our people would be happy. It is not names, but acts that count. Labels don't make revolutions, action does!"



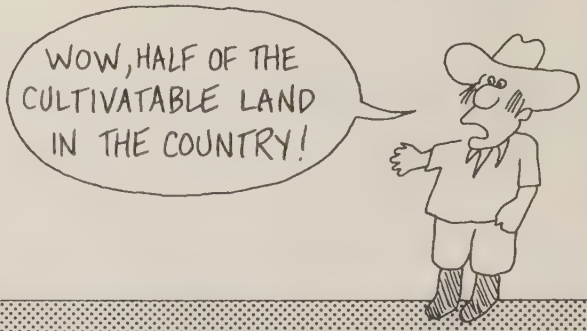

AND WHY A "NEW" NICARAGUA??
BECAUSE THE OLD ONE WAS NEVER OURS.
SOMOZA BORROWED MONEY TO BUY GUNS
TO KILL HIS OWN PEOPLE!
SANDINO VIVE!
HE LEFT ONLY $3.5 MILLION DOLLARS IN THE TREASURY. PEANUTS.

Occupied by the U.S. from 1912 to 1933, and from 1933 to 1979 by Somoza, a servant of the U.S., Nicaragua has never been able to use its wealth to help its people. (It went from being a Spanish colony to being a U.S. colony.

When victory came, each Nicaraguan's share of the foreign debt was $600... money which they had never seen, but which had to be repaid...

And where was the money to rebuild the country?

One of the first steps taken by the Junta of National Reconstruction was the confiscation and nationalization of all the property of Somoza and his accomplices (which has already been listed) and 1.2. million acres of land.



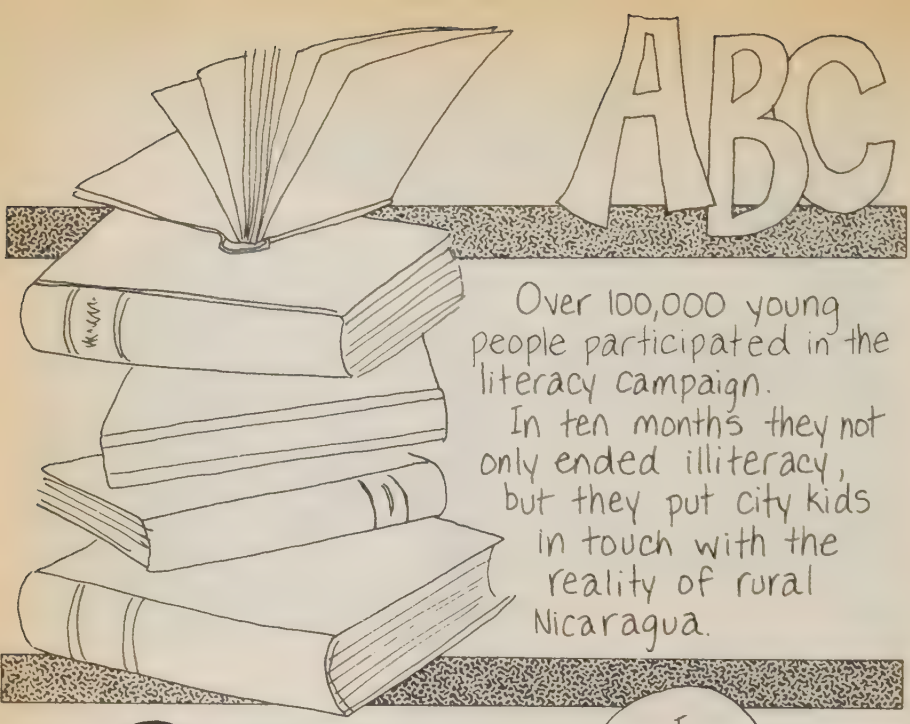
500 houses of Somocistas who fled were expropriated and used as day care centers, old age homes, health centers and schools.

Banks were nationalized.

Creating a new Nicaraguan was even more important than creating a new Nicaragua.

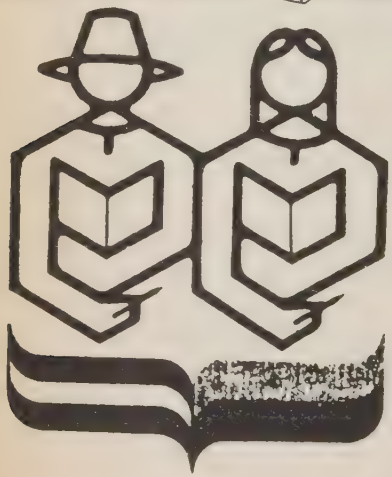
The people were given what Somoza had systematically denied them.

- 50.2 % of Nicaraguans are illiterate.
- 70 % of Nicaraguans don't have medical attention.
- 20 % of all children die before reaching the age of four.

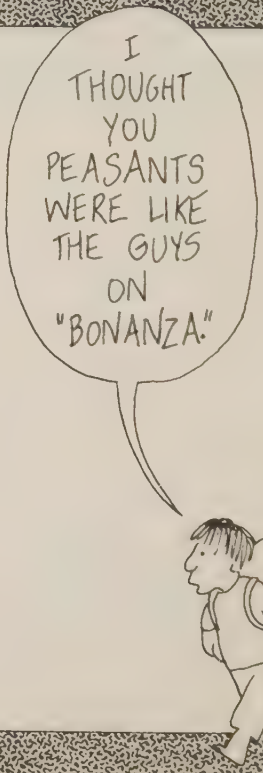


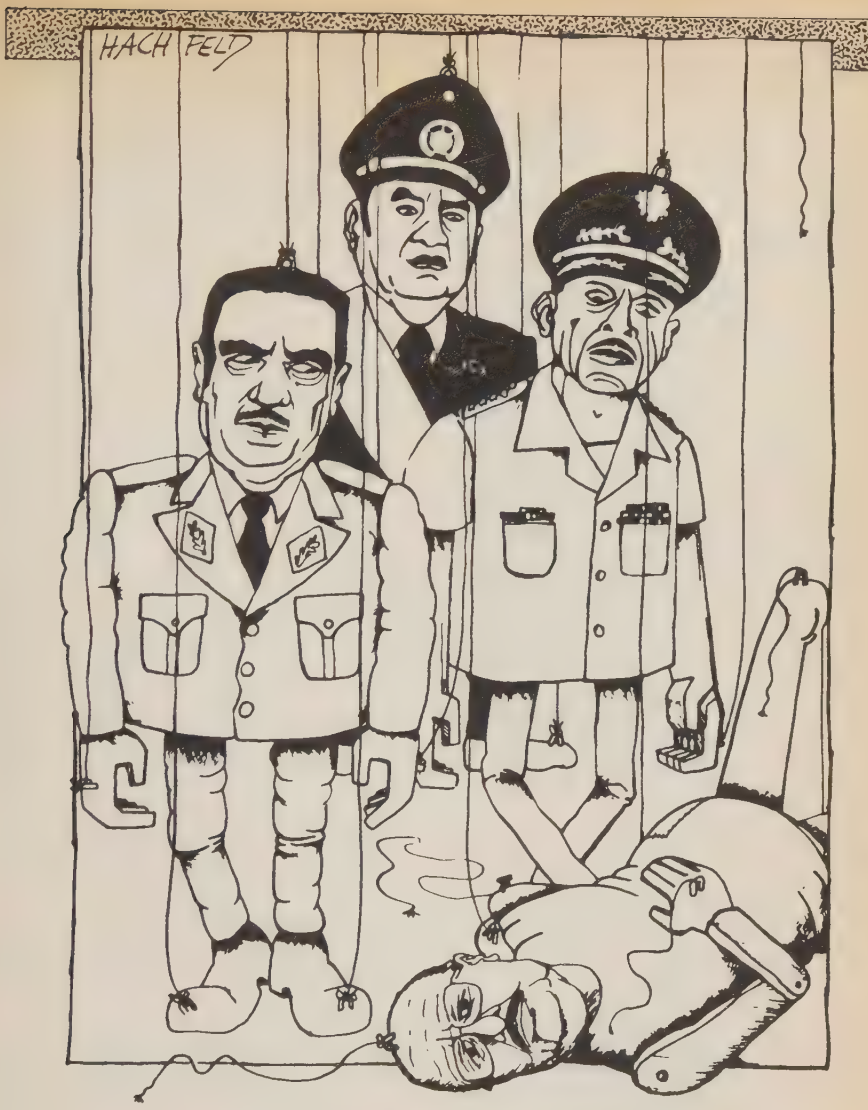
Over 100,000 young people participated in the literacy campaign.

In ten months they not only ended illiteracy, but they put city kids in touch with the reality of rural Nicaragua.



NATIONAL LITERACY CAMPAIGN: "HEROES AND MARTYRS OF NICARAGUAN LIBERATION."

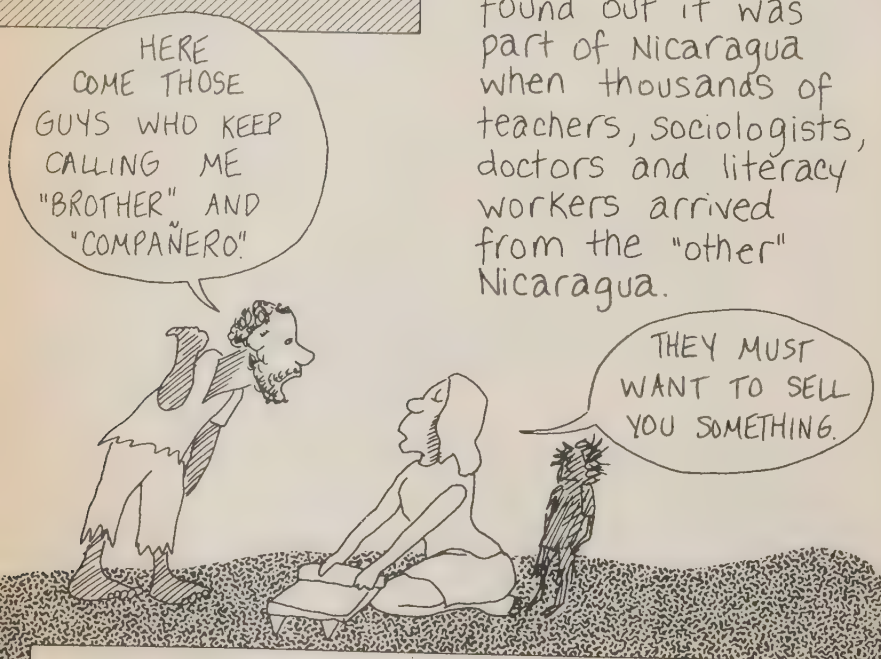




A little anecdote: On September 17, 1980 an Argentine Montonero commando unit liquidated don Anastasio Somoza in Asunción, Paraguay. He was 53.
You reap what you sow.

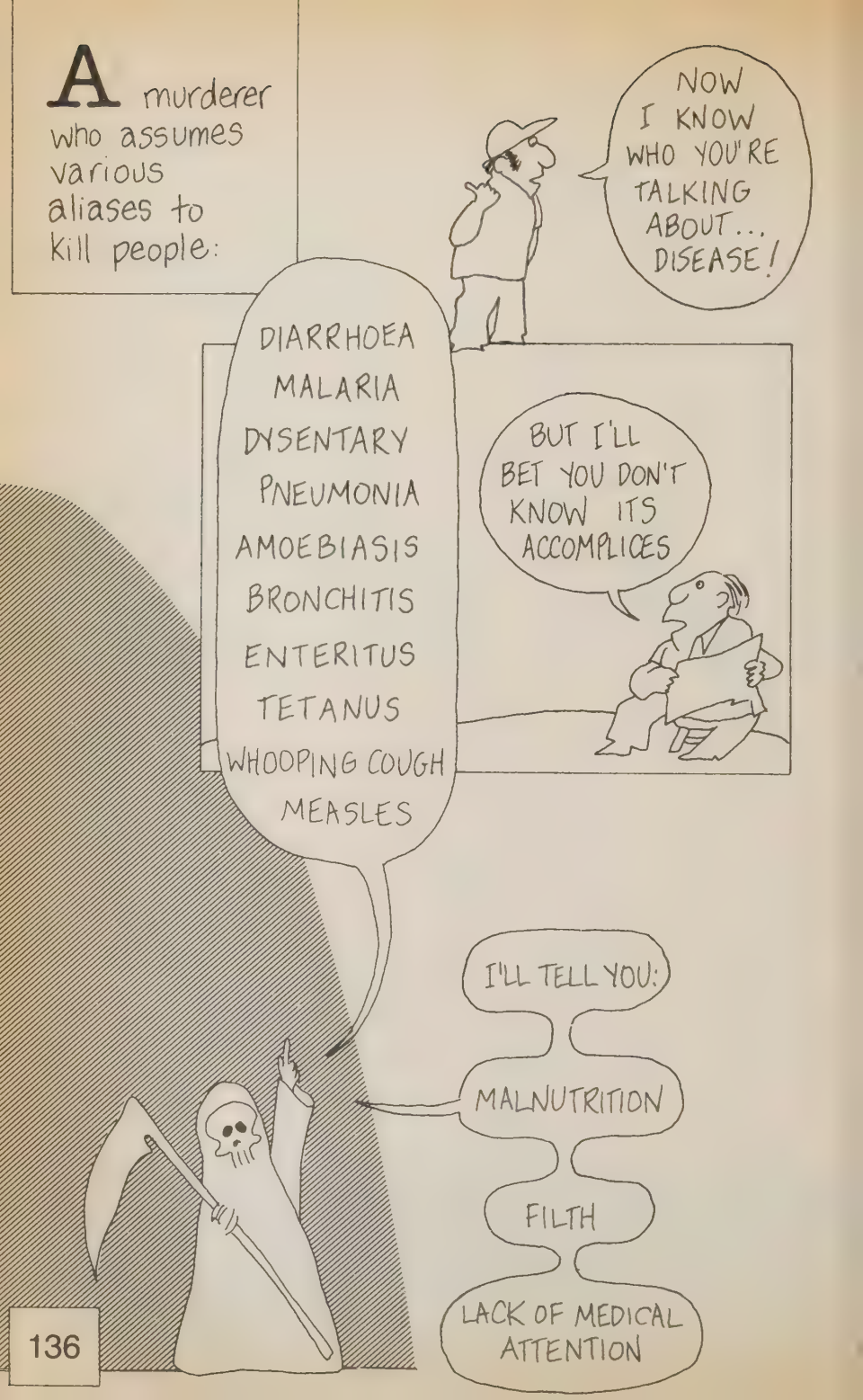
For a people depoliticized after 40 years of Somocismo and anti-communism, the literacy campaign was an important factor in uniting the country and incorporating people into the revolution.

The Atlantic Coast is home to another race, with its own language, religion and culture. It only found out it was part of Nicaragua when thousands of teachers, sociologists, doctors and literacy workers arrived from the "other" Nicaragua.



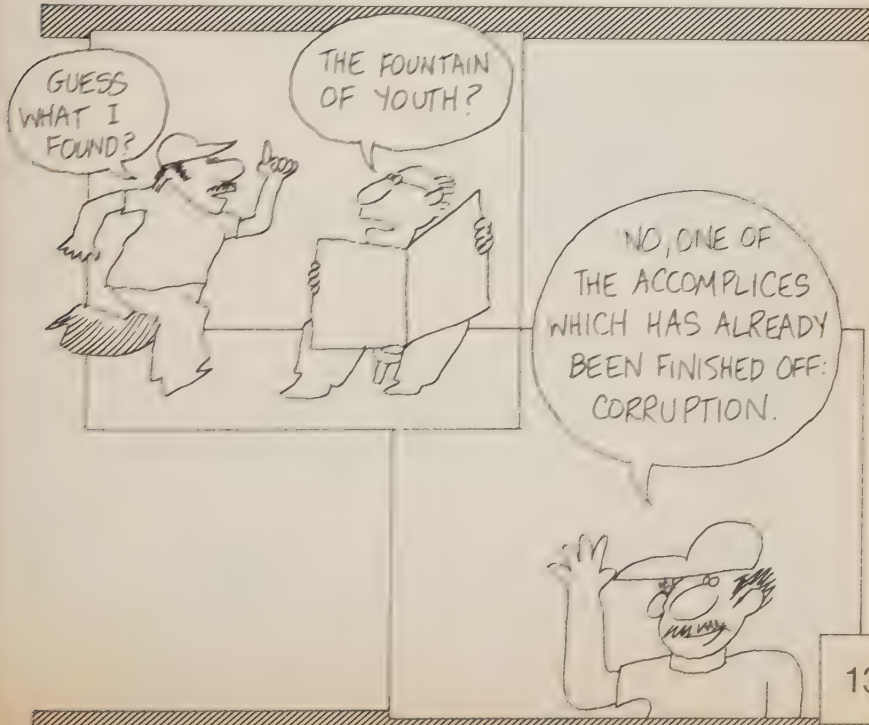
For the first time in their life the inhabitants of the Atlantic Coast participated in something which affected them directly. Literacy began to change their lives and health programs made even bigger changes . . .

The tyrant and his guard dogs killed many Nicaraguans.
FORTUNATELY SOMOZA IS NOW IN THE TRASH-BIN OF HISTORY!
VISIT PARAGUAY
BUT THERE'S STILL ONE KILLER LOOSE!
AS BAD AS THE GUARD?


A murderer who assumes various aliases to kill people:
NOW I KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT... DISEASE!
DIARRHOEA
MALARIA
DYSENTARY
PNEUMONIA
AMOEBIASIS
BRONCHITIS
ENTERITUS
TETANUS
WHOOPING COUGH
MEASLES
BUT I'LL BET YOU DON'T KNOW ITS ACCOMPLICES
I'LL TELL YOU:
MALNUTRITION
FILTH
LACK OF MEDICAL ATTENTION

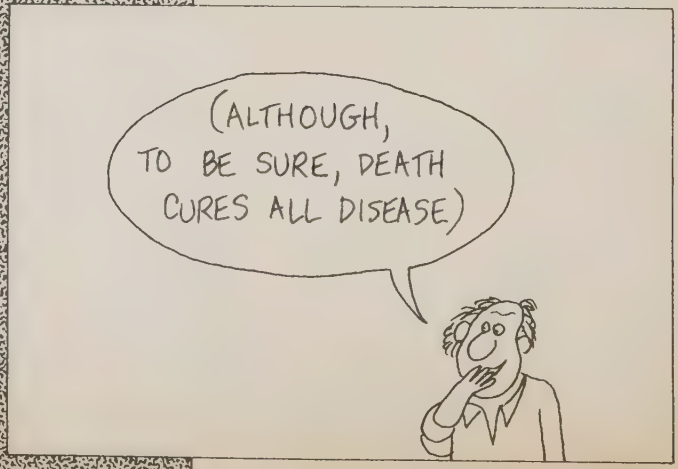
In the corrupt system which existed before, money which should have been used to build hospitals was stolen.

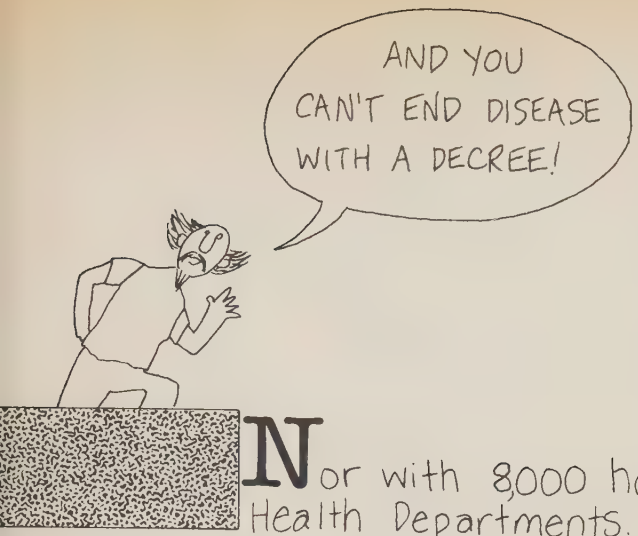
How many hospitals, of the few there were, did Somoza destroy before fleeing?



Indeed, getting rid of Somocismo also got rid of corruption, since it is the sine qua non of capitalism...

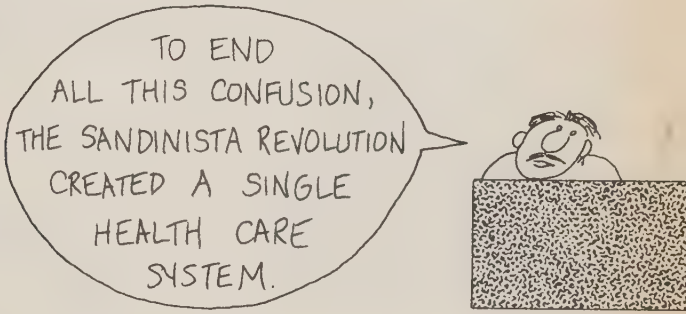
But you can't shoot malnutrition and filth.



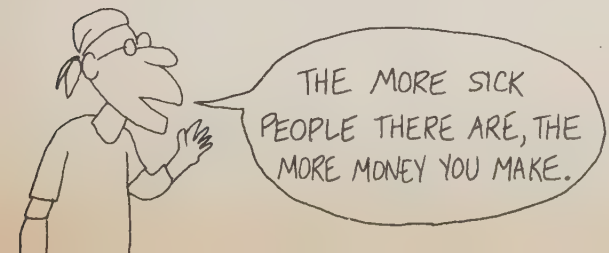


Nor with 8,000 hospitals and 500 Health Departments.

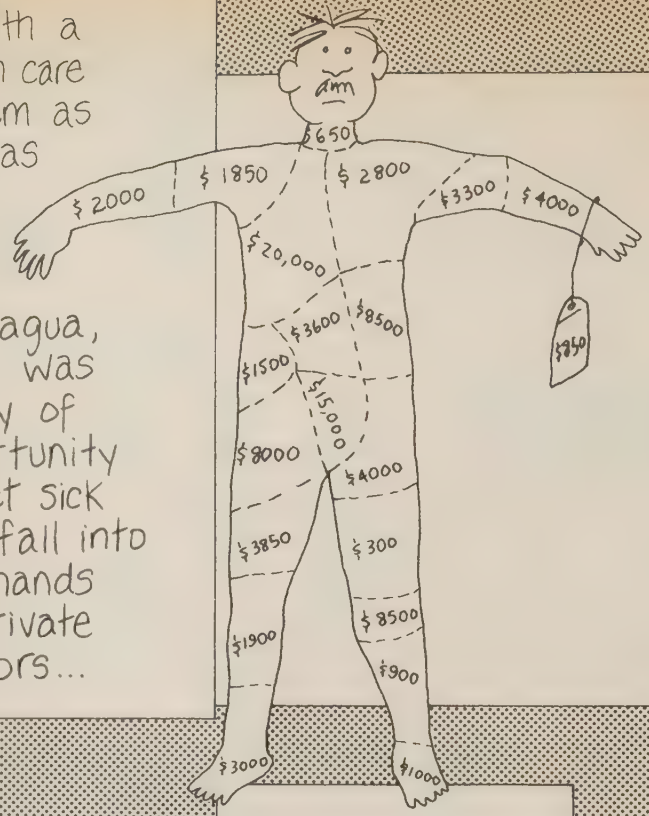
In the past, Nicaragua had 22 health institutions which openly competed to see who could steal the most and "help" the most sick people.



Medicine was just another business, and the principal goal of those who "cared" for the sick was to convert people into a source of income.



With a health care system as bad as the one in Nicaragua, there was plenty of opportunity to get sick and fall into the hands of private doctors...



It was a lucrative, well-planned business.

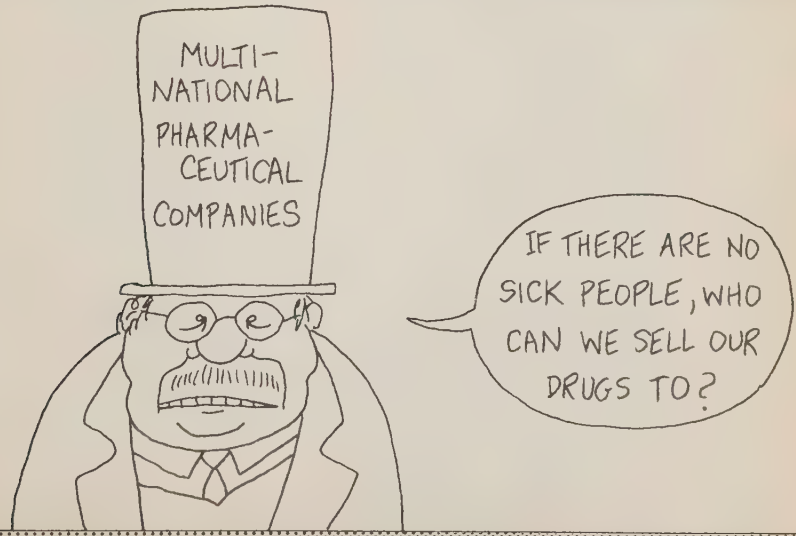
WHAT DID MALNUTRITION AND FILTH PRODUCE?	⇨ DISEASE	⇨ WHERE WEREN'T DISEASES CURED?	⇨ IN CAPITALIST HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

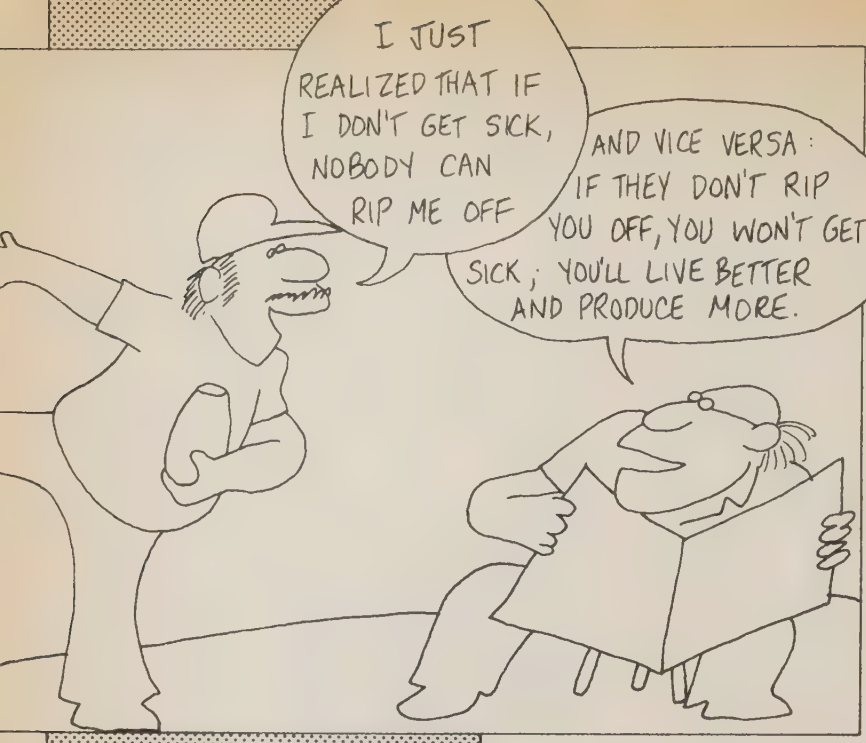
How can you have private medicine without sick people?

Medicine under capitalism is organized as a business: If you don't have any sick people, you don't have any profits...

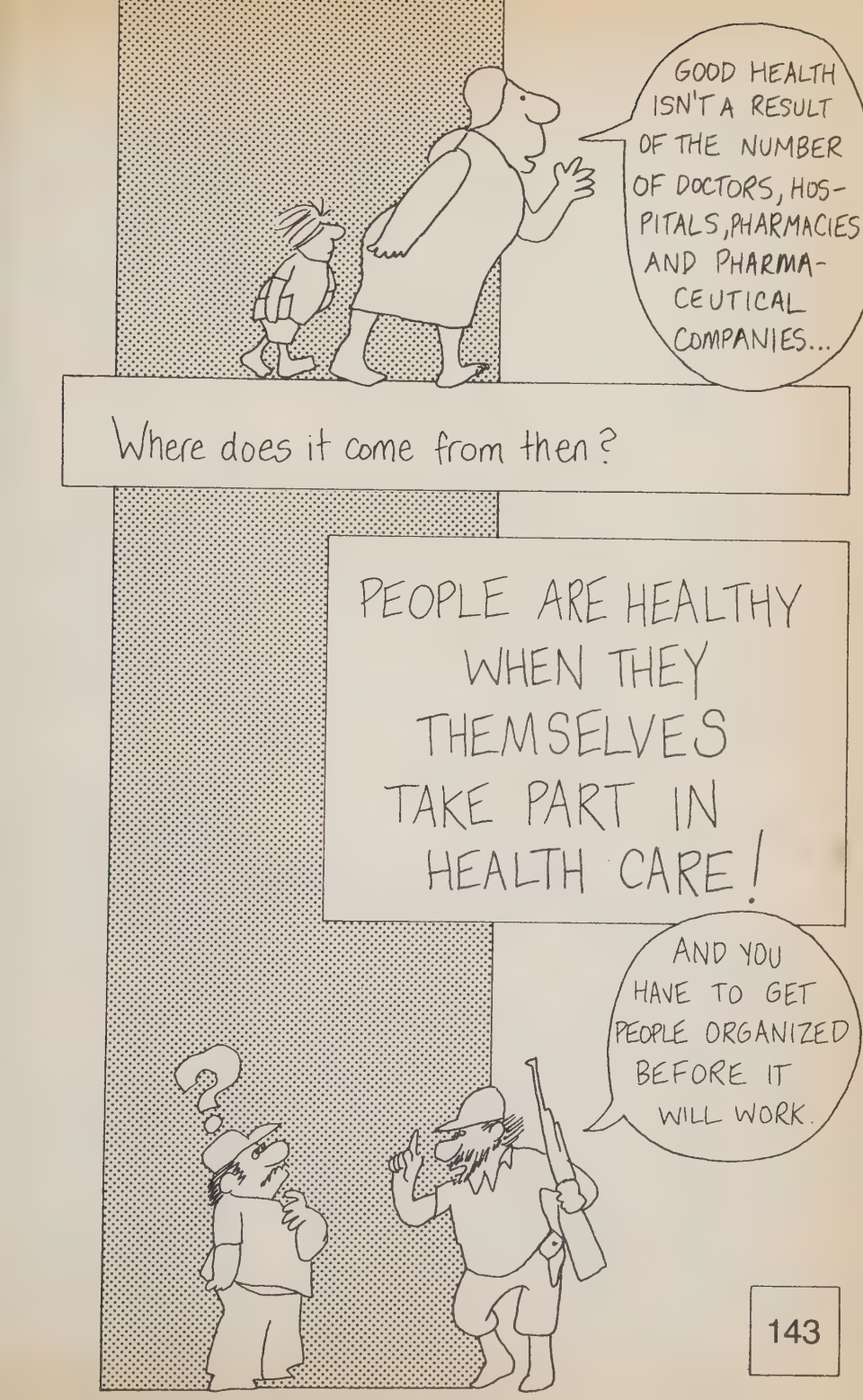
And without the poor people, there would be no ladies of St. Vincent, nor charity hospitals, nor filthy rich doctors nor millionaire health officials with five luxury cars at the side of their expensive homes.

...nor another important business in Latin America...



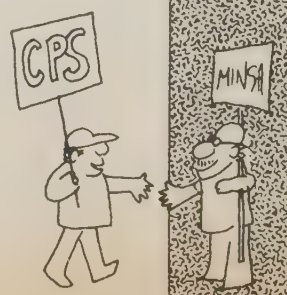

I JUST REALIZED THAT IF I DON'T GET SICK, NOBODY CAN RIP ME OFF
AND VICE VERSA: IF THEY DON'T RIP YOU OFF, YOU WON'T GET SICK; YOU'LL LIVE BETTER AND PRODUCE MORE.

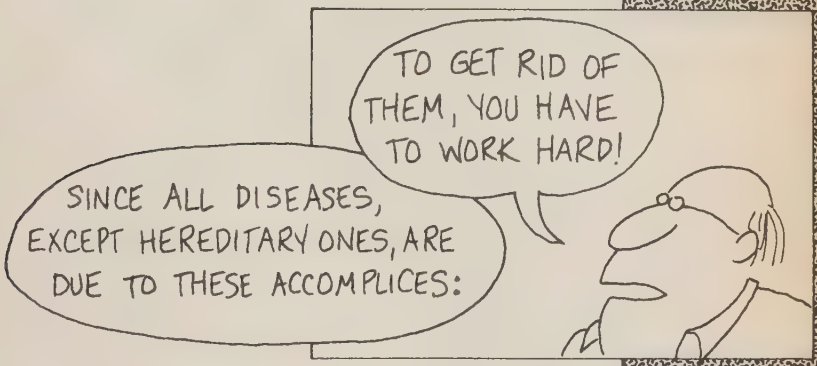
AND WE'LL ALL PROGRESS MORE!


GOOD HEALTH ISN'T A RESULT OF THE NUMBER OF DOCTORS, HOSPITALS, PHARMACIES AND PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES...
Where does it come from then?
PEOPLE ARE HEALTHY WHEN THEY THEMSELVES TAKE PART IN HEALTH CARE!
AND YOU HAVE TO GET PEOPLE ORGANIZED BEFORE IT WILL WORK.

Ever since the insurrection began, Nicaraguans have been organizing themselves. After the triumph, mass organizations were created, more or less following the Cuban model. Neighborhood committees on each block, groups in work centers, women's groups, Sandinista youth, trade unions, small land-owners, teachers, students, health-care workers, agricultural workers, everybody.

From the mass organizations emerged the People's Health Commission to coordinate all these efforts with the Health Ministry.



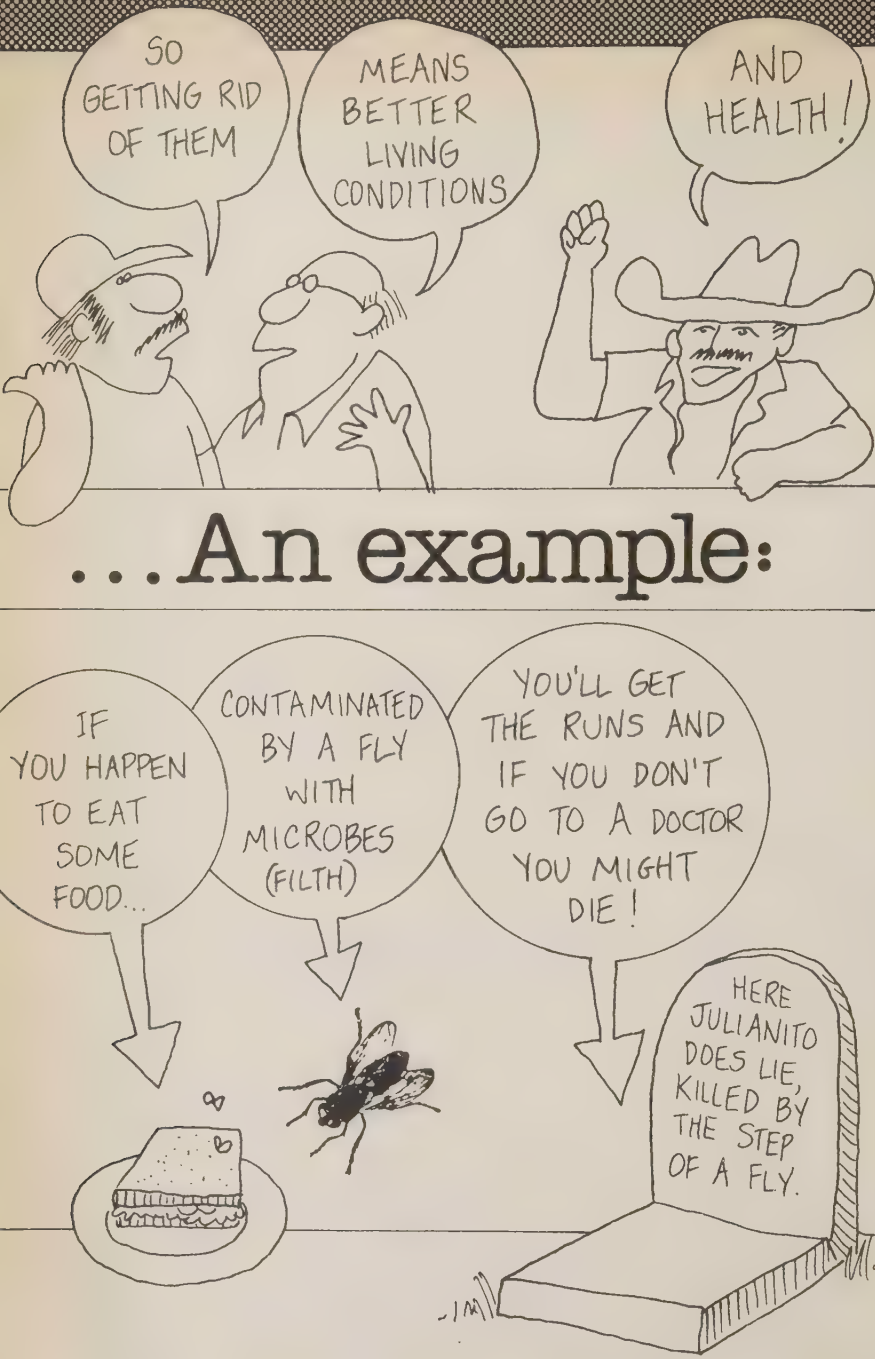


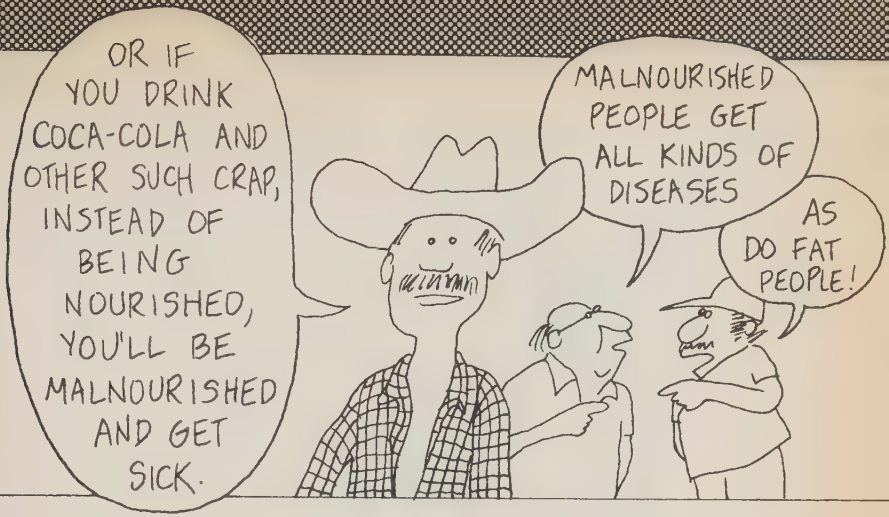
IGNORANCE

MALNUTRITION

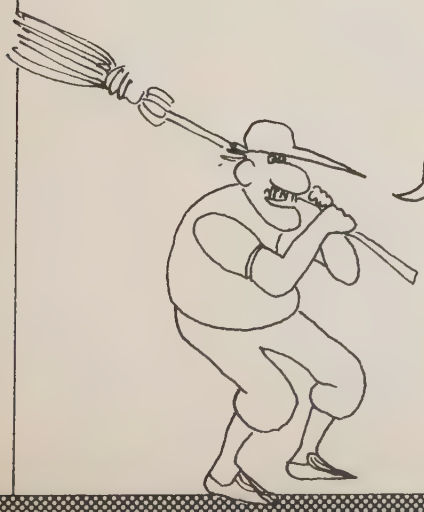
FILTH

LACK OF MEDICAL ATTENTION

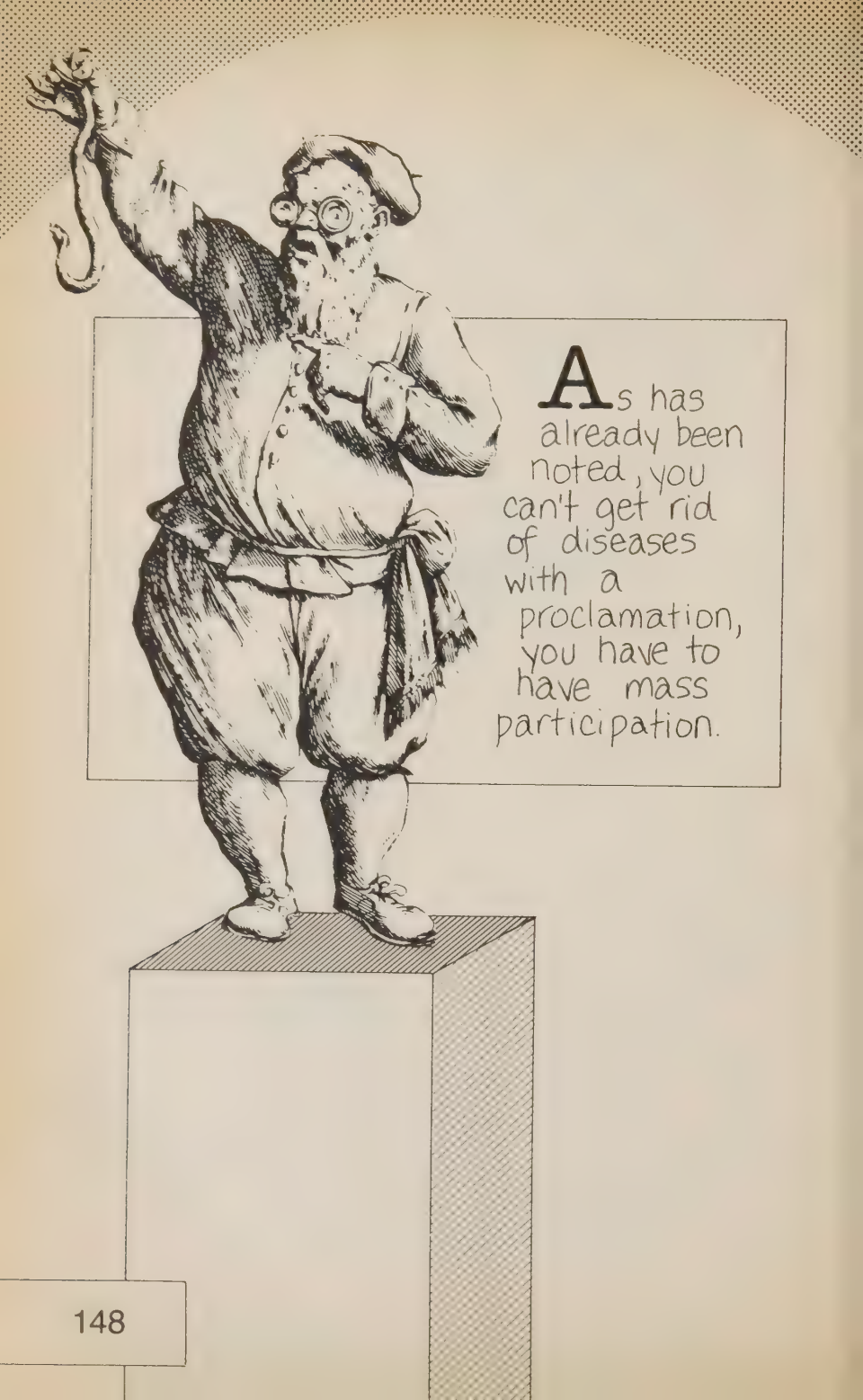

SO GETTING RID OF THEM
MEANS BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS
AND HEALTH!
...An example:
IF YOU HAPPEN TO EAT SOME FOOD...
CONTAMINATED BY A FLY WITH MICROBES (FILTH)
YOU'LL GET THE RUNS AND IF YOU DON'T GO TO A DOCTOR YOU MIGHT DIE!
HERE JULIANITO DOES LIE, KILLED BY THE STEP OF A FLY.


OR IF YOU DRINK COCA-COLA AND OTHER SUCH CRAP, INSTEAD OF BEING NOURISHED, YOU'LL BE MALNOURISHED AND GET SICK.
MALNOURISHED PEOPLE GET ALL KINDS OF DISEASES
AS DO FAT PEOPLE!

Taking all this (and thousands of other things) into consideration, the public health ministry has condemned to death the causes of illness already mentioned.



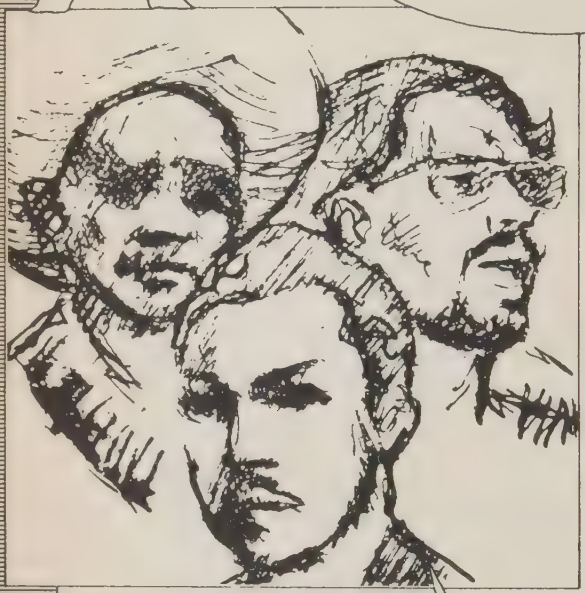
A real health revolution!


As has already been noted, you can't get rid of diseases with a proclamation, you have to have mass participation.

Thus after the literacy campaign a program began to educate people about health, through vaccination programs, clean-ups, nutrition seminars, and discussions about public health.

Public Health campaigns (in which almost everyone participates) are a major Sandinista victory in the effort to integrate the people into the revolution.

THE HEALTH AND LITERACY CAMPAIGNS ARE ONLY TWO OF THE THINGS THE REVOLUTION HAS DONE TO INTEGRATE THE PEOPLE INTO THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS AND GET THEM TO PARTICIPATE

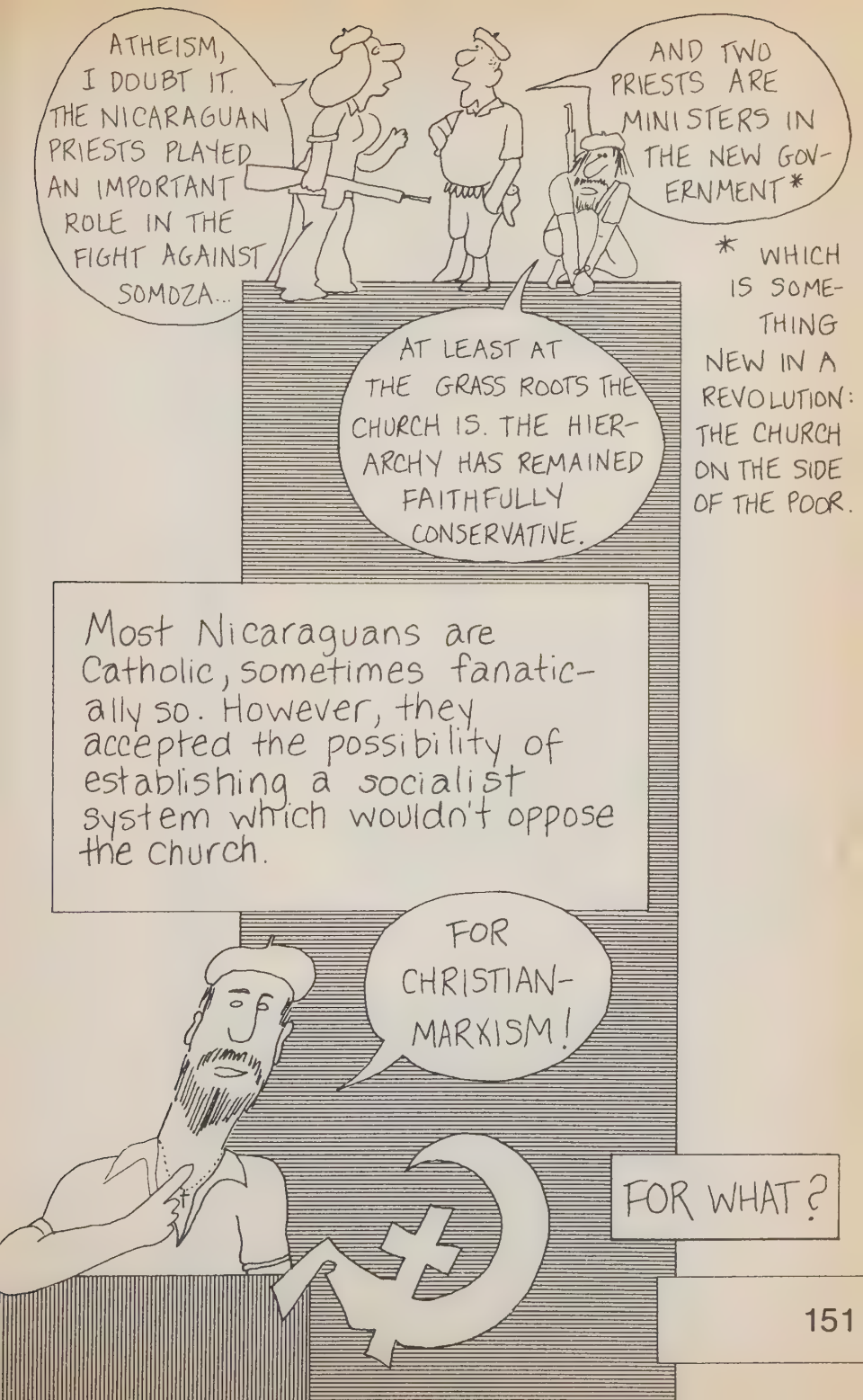


Other accomplishments have been the creation of militias to defend the country against American aggression.

CREATING PRODUCERS' CO-OPS...

Changing relations between workers and bosses, and reforms in education, culture, and in mass communication.

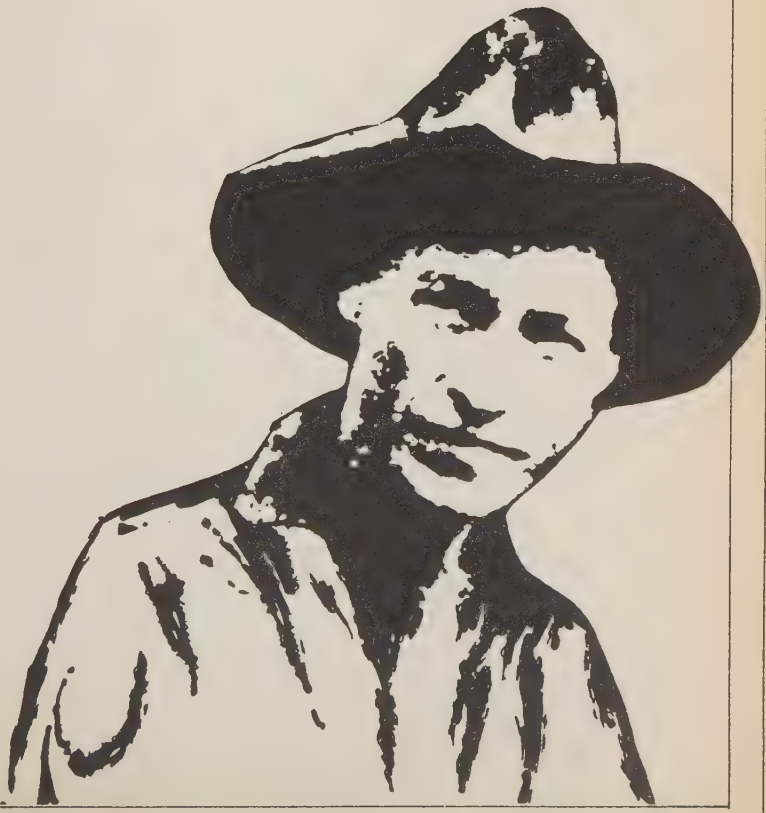
THAT IS TO SAY, NICARAGUA IS HEADED TOWARD ATHEIST SOCIALISM?


ATHEISM, I DOUBT IT. THE NICARAGUAN PRIESTS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SOMOZA...
AND TWO PRIESTS ARE MINISTERS IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT*
* WHICH IS SOMETHING NEW IN A REVOLUTION: THE CHURCH ON THE SIDE OF THE POOR.
AT LEAST AT THE GRASS ROOTS THE CHURCH IS. THE HIERARCHY HAS REMAINED FAITHFULLY CONSERVATIVE.
Most Nicaraguans are Catholic, sometimes fanatically so. However, they accepted the possibility of establishing a socialist system which wouldn't oppose the church.
FOR CHRISTIAN-MARXISM!
FOR WHAT?

DOESN'T THIS GO AGAINST WHAT THE POPE PREACHES ABOUT THE INCOMPATABILITY OF MARXISM AND CHRISTIANITY?
IT MIGHT, BUT IT DOESN'T GO AGAINST WHAT CHRIST PREACHED.

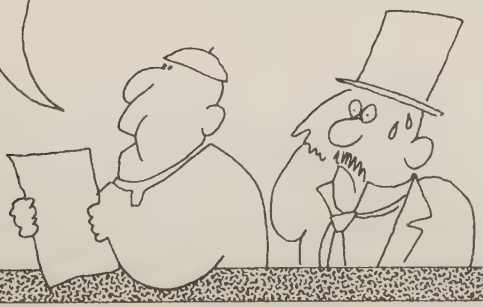
While the most conservative Nicaraguans were filling the streets with signs saying "Christ is coming," and "Christ is your salvation," the people knew that real Christianity, with justice for the poor, arrived in Nicaragua in the backpacks of the Sandinistas on July 19, 1979.

And what does the Nicaraguan church say?



In a pastoral letter of the Nicaraguan Episcopals dated November 17, 1979, the bishops stated:

"At times one hears expressed with anguish the fear that the present Nicaraguan revolutionary process is leading to socialism. If, as some feel, socialism will go astray, depriving men and peoples of their role as a protagonist in their history, if it blindly submits people to the manipulations and the dictates of those who arbitrarily wield power, then we cannot accept this false socialism. Nor can we accept a socialism which, going beyond its legitimate bounds, deprives men of the right to religious belief and the public expression of these beliefs. It is equally unacceptable to deny parents the right to educate their children according to their convictions, or to deny them any other human right. If, however, socialism means, as it should mean, the pre-eminence of the interests of the majority and a nationally planned economy, with mass participation, then we have nothing against which to object.



"In addition, we are confident that the revolutionary process will be something original, profoundly nationalistic and not imitative of other models. What we want, along with the majority of Nicaraguans, is a process which leads to a truly Nicaraguan society; not capitalist, not dependent, not totalitarian."

-Signed by the seven Nicaraguan bishops.

CUERNAVACA, MEXICO JUNE 1982

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